

# “Making Relatives”

A GUIDE FOR HEALING  
THE SOUL WOUND



SEPTEMBER 2022

# “Making Relatives”

## A GUIDE FOR HEALING THE SOUL WOUND

### DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to our ancestors who sacrificed for the People and created a path of resistance forged in love and sacrifice that sustains us today, to the future generations who continue on this path. To the sacred feminine energy and the ancestral memory that keeps us strong, and to our beloved mother earth and our grandmothers, for grounding and centering this work.

**A special dedication to** all the children who’ve experienced the soul wounding of the Boarding School Era and their Families. May this writing be a medicine bundle that remembers the boarding school era children and their descendants.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to express their appreciation and acknowledgment for:

- Those whose lived experience paved the way so a writing of this kind could be shared.
- Those whose wisdom and teachings guided us in both our careers and lives.
- The ancestors and generations yet to be born who helped guide the creation of this workbook.
- NASMHPD for acknowledging Indigenous People and the impact of colonization on the well-being of tribal communities recognizing that there is power in being a good relative.

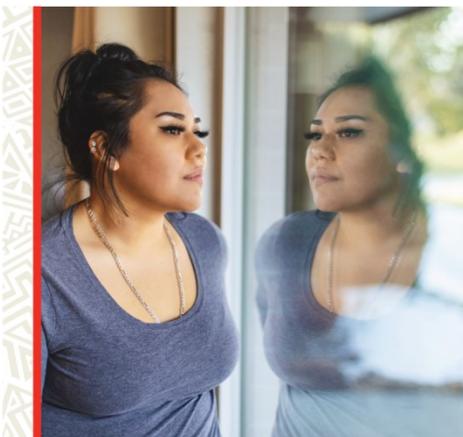
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.....	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	4
BACKGROUND INFORMATION: HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK .....	6
WORDS BEFORE ALL ELSE: PRAYERS TO ESTABLISH .....	8
<b>PRACTICE: CREATE A PERSONAL PRAYER.....</b>	<b>9</b>
RELATIONAL WORLD VIEW: YOUR GLASSES TO MAKE SENSE OF ALL YOU EXPERIENCE .....	11
<b>PRACTICE: RECOGNIZING IMBALANCE .....</b>	<b>13</b>
QUALITIES OF A GOOD RELATIVE .....	14
<b>PROTOCOL: BEING IN GOOD RELATIONS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PRACTICE: RECOGNIZING IMBALANCE .....</b>	<b>16</b>
INDIGENOUS STORY WORK: YOUR STORY IS BINDING AND CONNECTS .....	17
<b>PRACTICE: MY CREATION STORY.....</b>	<b>19</b>
BUILD A BUNDLE .....	20
<b>PRACTICE: MAKE A MEDICINE BAG.....</b>	<b>20</b>
SELF, COMMUNITY, AND SPIRITUAL CARE.....	23
SELF, COMMUNITY, AND SPIRITUAL CARE TOOLS AND PRACTICES, AKA GOOD MEDICINE.....	25
<b>PRACTICE: CREATE SELF, COMMUNITY, AND SPIRITUAL CARE PLAN.....</b>	<b>26</b>
THANKSGIVING: GRATITUDE.....	28
<b>PRACTICE: SPIRIT PLATE.....</b>	<b>28</b>
GLOSSARY OF TERMS .....	29
RESOURCES.....	31
REFERENCES .....	33

# INTRODUCTION

988 is the new three-digit code connecting people to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. The Lifeline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays, to respond via call, chat, or text. Connecting to 988 results in care and support for anyone experiencing a mental health related emergency. Emergencies that include thoughts of suicide, mental health, and/or substance misuse crisis. Those in need will be connected to trained crisis counselors. 988 is for anyone who needs suicide or mental health related crisis support, including family and friends of someone in need. 988 is intended to increase access to support while reinforcing that mental health is just as important as dialing 911 for physical health crises.

A vision was shared to develop something to support prevention of the crisis. This vision considered the unique situations that exist and might surface as 988 is launched. We recognized



that many tribal communities have limited resources available to respond to a behavioral health related crisis. Crisis responders are often located outside of a tribal community. Some families do not have reliable internet or phone coverage and bandwidth in some communities is limited. We expect glitches along the way as 988 is implemented. We acknowledge that the impact of colonization has led to reluctance, at times, to trust those whom we don't personally know, such as when in crisis and faced with non-tribal support or law enforcement.

Tribal communities have been, and continue to be, impacted by historical trauma and unresolved grief. Much of the trauma originating with the colonization of this country and the federal policies that were intentionally designed to “kill the Indian to save the man.” The legacy of colonial violence lingers today and impacts the disproportionate rates of chronic illness, autoimmune disorders, shortened life span, depression, anxiety, substance misuse, and suicide in Indian Country. Suicide is preventable.

Tribal communities possess a wealth of Indigenous knowledge—wisdom for knowing how to remain connected to our original teachings. Teachings that promote belonging, generosity, kindness, and understanding that everything has life, and all life is interconnected. There is growing research which shows that incorporating culture into the services provided and increasing cultural, ancestral and community connectedness with Tribal people can reduce the impact of historical and generational trauma.

Tribal communities tend to be relational. Great value is placed on family, including extended family and community. Our family and tribe are where we traditionally learn how to be in the world and of our responsibilities. Many traditional Indigenous teachings include lessons about what distinguishes us from other life is our responsibilities as Human Beings, as the Real People. We are responsible to care for all of life, we are responsible to be a good relative to others, we are responsible to steward the land (Mother Earth) and we are responsible to our ancestors, past, present, and future (Seventh Generation). Everyone was meant to have a family. We often recognize people we are not biologically related to as family members.

We invite you to become a good relative in your community: an Uncle, an Auntie...a Helper. Be a good relative to someone who may be experiencing imbalance so together we can prevent emergencies. Oftentimes people will report that what helped them was having someone to be an anchor for them when they were going through rough patches in their lives. This workbook will serve as a guide in understanding what happens in people's lives and where support is sometimes needed.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION: HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Our vision in creating this workbook was to promote prevention by connecting people in communities to help eliminate the sense of being alone, of being a burden, of not having someone who understands and to increase connection to each other. Too often a mental health and/or substance misuse related crisis stems from disconnection. This workbook is about connection and belonging.

We recognize that many of us have a lived experience of supporting a family member in crisis or going through our own personal crisis. Our lived experience is a gift to be shared when supporting another. A gift that comes from knowing what it feels like to hurt, to not want to bother anyone, to feel strong emotions that we kept hidden, or perhaps to want to numb ourselves through the use of drugs and/or alcohol or other behaviors. Our lived experience was earned from the times we believed we did not matter. Our unique place in this country often goes unrecognized. We are at times referred to as “something else” or “other,” it can feel like we are being erased.

Our lived experience is a ceremony that initiates us into the sacred society of the re-membered. A society that enables us to recognize when another might need support, of family, of community. Lived experience helps us to share kindness, patience, humility, and empathy, as we sit in silence just being present with another, or to help us find humor in the deepest hurt. Lived experience helps to create opportunities to connect, it binds us. This is a sacred trust.



Thank you for joining the circle to be a good relative to another. This workbook was created for family, friends, community members, and just about anyone else who wants to be prepared in the event they recognize someone is in need of support. The workbook was written with the belief in “nothing about us, without us” and that tribes know their communities best. It was written knowing the power that comes from the wisdom in tribal communities. We use the term community to refer to reservations/reserves as well as our gathering places in urban centers.

We use “tribes” to mean Tribal Nations, reservation/rural based Tribal Nations or Urban Indians. This reference includes both American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people. It additionally encompasses Native American, First Nation, Indigenous, American Indian, Indian (all terms used across generations). Our recommendation is to ask the individual their preference. We understand that Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) is an acronym used frequently,

however this neglects to acknowledge the unique political status of tribal sovereignty, so we recommend BIPOC/Tribal Nations.

This workbook is designed for you to use it. You can use it digitally or in print form. We know that some of us hesitate to write in workbooks, but we want you to. Writing will help you to develop the knowledge and awareness needed to respond when someone might need your help. Please try to detach from concerns for “right answers” or proper spelling, this is intended for your personal use, nobody will be grading or judging. Doodle or draw your answers if you prefer.

The workbook is formatted to include some teachings then exercises for you to complete. These lessons are meant to help you recognize how to help someone in need, grounded in the traditional teachings of shared responsibility. Lessons were influenced from the knowledge of culture as prevention, the Relational World View, Native Self-Actualization emphasizing the importance of belonging, the concept of soul wounding, ancestral knowledge, and the value held by tribal people of everything having life and all life being related.

We use Creator to reflect the belief in something greater than ourselves that ties us to our original creation. Others associate with names such as God, Orenda, Great Mystery, or the name used in their particular tribal language.

We use the word “bundle” to reflect how medicine bundles are used in many tribal teachings. A bundle is a collection of objects carried by the owner. The items in the bundle are believed to have healing powers. May each of you create your own bundle with the information from this workbook. We invite you to also be inspired to create a bundle unique to you.

You can follow the lessons in linear order, or you can skip around to the lesson that seems more interesting to you in the moment. Please, just be sure to complete each section.

Shall we begin the journey?

# WORDS BEFORE ALL ELSE: PRAYERS TO ESTABLISH

All people once lived as tribes. This is true for all races and ethnicities across the globe. In tribal communities we regularly start gatherings, meetings, and other events with a prayer, to start off in a “good way.” Prayers are the words before all else that set intention and get us grounded in the work. This act of prayer is important in tribal communities. Praying connects us and sets the

intention for our time together. It can be thought of announcing to the Creator, the ancestors and all who are present what the purpose is for the gathering.



Our ancestors knew that prayer, ceremony, ritual, meditation, mindfulness, and deep breathing can help us to get and stay grounded. Imagine if you were hunting and were not able to remain grounded while attempting to harvest a bison. Natural Law teaches us about the importance of balance, of give and take, if making an offering if we take something. Our prayers help maintain the balance of Natural Law. We learned how to practice mindfulness when out gathering to be aware of the plant life as a relative, to use prayer to give thanks for the gifts of the plant, this helps prevent overharvest-

ing as well as how to stay patient when gathering even the tiniest of huckleberries. Throughout the generations we learned how to sit peacefully during ceremonies that often last for hours, sometimes days. Our prayers, deep breathing, and meditation often add to our ability to be present in ceremonies in a respectful way. Even the youngest of children benefit when their mother is calm, they mirror mom’s energy.

Prayer, ceremony, ritual, meditation, mindfulness, and deep-breath work have been shown to help regulate our parasympathetic nervous system, regulate trauma response, help ground and center us in times of crisis. During times of crisis, we experience emotional distress in our minds and bodies. When we involve a regular practice of prayer, ceremony, ritual, meditation, mindfulness, and deep breathing we can respond to crises in more responsive ways, rather than reactive ways.

## PRACTICE: CREATE A PERSONAL PRAYER

Not all of us are comfortable praying publicly. Some of the possible reasons are humility, not wanting to offend Elders and healers who may be present, being self-conscious if we are praying “correctly,” or perhaps not having a relationship with the Spirit world. We know from our years of supporting people in crisis that sometimes we will need a prayer for ourselves to remain calm, to find support, and to instill hope to the hurting. When we are supporting another, they will often ask if we will pray for them.

We invite everyone to think of ways they can pray that will be comfortable and feel good for them. We share with you some of the elements of prayer so you can create your own personal prayers.

Many stand while prayer is being done, yet other tribes sit. Some of us stand so we ground ourselves with Mother Earth as we humble ourselves before the ancestors. It's as if we are all standing in a circle with the Creator holding hands when we stand.

Begin with a deep breath in and exhale slowly, with intention. Repeat this a few times and each time feel your breath go deeper as you breathe in love then exhale love. You are being connected to the original breath of our creation. The sharing of breath is a sacred act.

Most important is to pray from your heart, understanding that sometimes we may not have adequate words to express what is felt deeply or we may not wish to verbalize it publicly. I like to place my hand on my heart as a form of sign language to Creator and the helping spirits of what is in my heart. You can also choose to speak what is in your heart, again do what aligns with you.

Try to use your original language when possible, even if it is one or two words. We know we have different levels of fluency when it comes to our tribal languages due to colonization and forced assimilation. We don't want you to feel badly if you may not have knowledge of your original language, but invite those who do, to include it when possible.

Some people pray with words. Some pray by adding a song or making use of plant medicines. Others will have ceremonies for their prayers such as in the sweat lodge, pipe ceremony, sundance, stomp dance, etc.

### Key Elements of a Prayer

- State your intention for the prayer
- Speak from the heart
- Pray silently or out loud
- State *thank you* when finished

We want you to figure out what speaks to you, listen to your heart and intuition. Pray in the way that has meaning for you knowing prayer can be simple and silent or part of a ceremony with protocols.

Include your *intention* for the prayer. Intention is the “why” for the prayer. If your relatives asked you to pray for them then that is the intention: “...I pray on behalf of my sister as you know what is in her heart...” If you need guidance on how to reach out to the relative you are concerned about then the intention then an example of an intention is “Creator, Ancestors, I come to you to ask for your guidance on how I can speak to my sister Dolores to let her know I am worried about her since her brother died.”

When you finish your prayer a simple *thank you* to signify completion.

# RELATIONAL WORLD VIEW<sup>1</sup>: YOUR GLASSES TO MAKE SENSE OF ALL YOU EXPERIENCE

A world view can be thought of as the glasses we look through to make sense of the world around us. Some kinds of glasses that exist in this country are linear and relational, or Western and Indigenous.

- **Linear World View**—Think about a straight line. Common in the medical model, cause and effect approach, events take place in sequential order. Values the individual.
- **Relational World View**—Think about everything being connected, interrelated, related. The relational world view teaching was gifted to us by Terry Cross who is Seneca, Bear Clan. It is similar to the medicine wheel teachings of many tribes.
- **Western World View**—Focus on the intellectual, problem-focused, and hierarchical.
- **Indigenous World View**—Focused on the heart and intuition, process-oriented and relational at its core.

When we are in balance we know our purpose, we experience wellness, we have meaningful connections, experience a sense of gratitude, we are right with the world, and know what we do that impacts on others. We are all related.



Historically, Western psychological care has focused on the “pathology” of AI/AN people, with the inference being that these health indicators, or ways of coping with colonialism, are pathological. Much of this Western psychological care focuses on the negative impacts of such indicators, such as substance abuse and its effect on AI/AN communities and the impact of historical trauma. What if we looked at this as a strength rather than a deficit, and developed interventions on this as a strength? The message many AI/AN people hear, and internalize, is that they are weak, they are broken, they are sick. But if one looks at the reality of the AI/AN people’s condition, AI/AN people are strong and resilient and are thriving.

AI/AN people have not been drawn to interventions that have a focus on deficits and pathology. There has been an increased understanding of the importance of cultural relevance of having interventions and providers who have cultural humility, and who are able to engage clients in the treatment process. Treatment modalities are being developed and tested that focus on

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/resource-program/Relational-Worldview-Model.pdf>

cultural competence and awareness to engage and support different world views. Additionally, rather than looking at health disparities as a pathology, look at these as coping skills that have kept AI/AN people alive, even after 500 years of colonization.

Indigenous world view, commonly referred to as Traditional Indigenous Knowledge (TIK), has been defined as “a cumulative body of knowledge, know-how, practices and representations maintained and developed by peoples with extended histories of interaction with the natural environment” (Boven & Morohashi, 2002 pg. 3). This understanding, interpretation and meaning are part of a cultural experience that is expressed through language, naming, classification systems, resource use practices, ritual, spirituality, and worldview. Much of this knowledge is expressed through stories, oral history, ritual, legends, ceremony, song, and other means of communication. Since time immemorial, Indigenous cultures have been masters of adaptation and change.

AI/AN people—we walk, live, and work in multiple worlds. For practitioners, we need to learn how to navigate these worlds as we work in the “space in between” all of these worlds. It is imperative that we stay in balance, practice self, community, and spiritual care, and find gratitude in our lives.

## PRACTICE: RECOGNIZING IMBALANCE

The Medicine Wheel/Relational World View provides a model for who we are as individuals: we have an intellectual self, spiritual self, emotional self, and physical self. You can also use this to reflect on developmental stages.

If you think about infants, you will recognize how they often communicate through emotions such as crying or giggling. It is in these early stages where the brain is developing the fastest, birth through five years old.



We can then move around the circle and think about what happens to the body as those children become adolescents. Their bodies change, they experience growing pains, bodies develop to be able to create life.

As we enter adulthood our life includes focus on social aspects such as employment, marriage, friendships. During adulthood we spend most of our time being social in the workplace, in our personal relationships, in our families, in activities and ceremonies.

Continue on the circle to our twilight years, the time when Elders are reflecting on completing their time on this side of the stars and what legacy they will leave behind. It is a time of grandchildren, passing on teachings, reminding our families of our connections. During our elder years, many report increased dreams with visits from loved ones. It is as if the connection to the spirit world becomes more active, or perhaps it is because we are less distracted by the demands of adulthood such as growing our families, work, etc.

Being in balance can produce a strong, positive sense of well-being and safety. Use the diagram to look at the different areas of your life to identify where you might need some support. Again, this practice can be used with anyone you are offering support to so they can understand where some of their imbalance is to know what kind of help might be useful.

# QUALITIES OF A GOOD RELATIVE

Traditionally, in tribal communities there are clear roles and expectations set for everyone. Aunties, Uncles, grandparents, children, Elders, Two Spirit people, we all knew what role we played in the family, community, and tribes. Being a good relative was a clearly stated expectation. How these roles were designated was different from Nation to Nation. In some tribes, the Elders have a vision for the role of the children coming in, and other tribes may have a visioning ceremony where the individual goes on a vision quest.



The role of being a good relative always centers on the greater good of the community. Being a good relative is simply treating another as if they are family. Being a good relative is tied to the teachings among tribes on how Creator intended for us to treat others. We can look at this on a continuum of being very formal in adhering to etiquette or being more general in how we relate

to another. An example of formal protocol would be in how we interact with Elders. Or, having a ceremony to adopt another to be recognized as family. More general is to consider the traits of a good relative. Consider some of these traits in a good relative and circle the ones you would want in another:

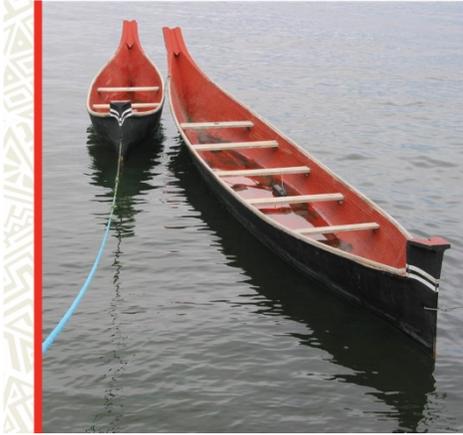
- Kindness
- Generosity
- Humble
- Loving
- Accepting
- Patience
- Humorous
- Spiritual
- Good cook
- Respectful
- Traditional Knowledge Keeper
- Trustworthy
- Keeps their word
- Resourceful

Being a good relative also means being in relationship with our ancestors, past, present, and future, to the land and Mother Earth, and all living things. There are protocols for how we interact with all living things. Prayers, how we introduce ourselves, gratitude for the gifts of life, just to name a few.

## PROTOCOL: BEING IN GOOD RELATIONS

Protocol simply stated, is etiquette. In many Tribal/Native communities there is protocol for how we interact with each other, how we introduce ourselves, who our relations are,

acknowledgement of the ancestral homelands we are on, and asking for permission to land ([protocol of canoe journey](#)). Taking the time to do introductions, acknowledge the land and the ancestors and to learn about each other is an important aspect of the relational worldview.



In the Pacific Northwest, the Tribes practice a yearly gathering of the Canoe Journey. After spending several weeks on the water, resting at each Tribal village along the way, over one hundred canoes land at the host's Tribal grounds. On arrival at the host Tribe, visiting Canoe Families ask formal permission of the hosts to land, sometimes speaking in their Native languages or with song. In this protocol the Canoe Families introduce themselves, who they are, where

they are from, what Tribal Nation they are, and ask for permission to land. The host Tribe follows up by also introducing themselves, who they are, and give permission to land, and offer food and rest. A potlatch held in celebration, a sharing of food, song, dance, and gifts that lasts for days. View [Canoe Journey: Following Traditional Protocol](#).

An example from one of the authors on introduction:

*Halito (Hello)! My names are Ahchishi Okshulba "Honeysuckle Breeze," Onnahinli Fichik (Danica) "Morning Star," and Aspen Leaves Turning Gold. I am Choctaw of the Watonlak Oshi "White Crane" Clan and Scottish of the Clan Ross, born and raised in Northern New Mexico. I come to this work as a multiracial woman, tribally enrolled citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, who grew up in the diverse and beautiful community of Northern New Mexico. My father is Richard Brown, my mother was Linda Ross; my grandfather was Watches Standing Buffalo and my great grandmother was Bradda Cloud. I currently reside on the traditional homelands of the Middle Chinook People, in Scappoose, Oregon along the Nch'i-Wa'na (Columbia) River and am the Behavioral Health Director of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board.*

## PRACTICE: MYSELF, MY FAMILY, MY COMMUNITY, MY TRIBE/NATION

Using the medicine wheel, in each section answer the following questions to create your own introduction and protocol.

**MYSELF:** What is your name(s), what is a story about your name, what does it mean?

**MY FAMILY:** What is your family name, where are your people from, where do your ancestors come from?

**MY COMMUNITY:** What are the different communities you come from, live in, visit, share, and create in?

**MY TRIBE/MY NATION:** What is your ethnic background(s)?



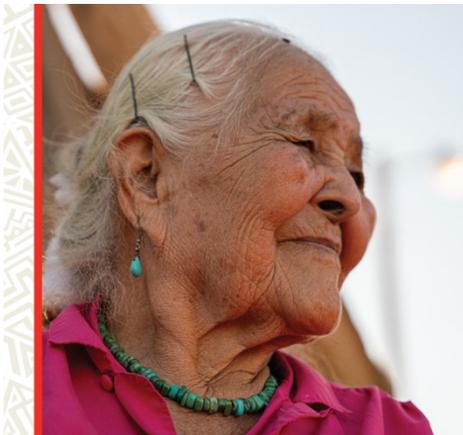
# INDIGENOUS STORY WORK: YOUR STORY IS BINDING AND CONNECTS

Through the practice of story work and oral traditions, Indigenous people learn to live in right relationship with themselves, their families, communities, and all of creation. This understanding, interpretation and meaning are parts of a cultural experience that are expressed through language, naming and classification of the environment and systems, resource use practices, ritual, spirituality, and worldview. Sharing power in the telling can be healing for self and others.

Particularly, the aspects of indigenous story work is a form of TIK and are forms of survivance. Historically, TIK comes out of the biological and ecological sustainability fields (Boven and Morohashi, 2002, Nelson, 2008), but this knowledge system provides providers important understanding of the complex human condition within the environments that we live and are impacted by, and creates an understanding that we are in relation with Mother Earth, our ancestors, and all relations and living things.

There are two roles in indigenous story work: teller of the story and listener. Speaking is our primary way to communicate. However, communication does not stop with the spoken word. All cultures have told stories enhancing them with body language, food, dance, art, music,

storytelling, drama, crafts, literature, and religious rites. Storytelling reflects our rich cultural heritage of the generations before us, and it leads us to understand how our past has influenced our present and passing this on to the next generations.



Listening is not just about listening to people with our ears, but with our hearts. It is also about listening to everything. Listening with the intention to be present, not listening to respond. The telling and listening of indigenous story work is a sacred trust. Survivance in this context mandates storytelling as a way of establishing AI/AN people's identity in the present, as opposed to viewing storytelling merely as preserving traditions of the past. Hume (2006) believes that "[t]o be a keeper and sharer of stories is to take on a sacred

trust" (pg. 207). To be effective, survivance stories need to be malleable and bend to the needs of the storyteller, the audience, and the community. This addresses the apparent paradox of asserting that no two groups of indigenous peoples are the same while simultaneously claiming that all indigenous peoples use storytelling in the same way. It is more appropriate to state that storytelling is common ground and that individual stories within individual canons of individual tribes reflect the diversity of the indigenous experience and in the development of one's identity. This tradition is not an experience of shedding identity. Rather, it is an exercise in reaffirming and reclaiming it.

Indigenous story work gives providers opportunities to develop a more nuanced understanding of the complex and intersectional issues that affect people’s lives that, in turn, can inform treatment planning and development specifically by including the narrative and story work of the communities that are most affected by health disparities.

When this knowledge is shared in a collective capacity, by utilizing TIK and practices such as indigenous story work, we can move from simply understanding the information to developing a shared and collective motivation to change, along with a process for reinforcing that change. This change is centered on the praxis of love and sacrifice. Indigenous story work is medicine and is sacred.

AI/AN people frequently communicate in very different ways than non-Natives. Often the most important message comes at the end of what they are saying. Their talking style is usually not as fast and to the point as non-Native people—sometimes AI/AN people are saying one thing and non-Natives are hearing another thing.



## Traditional Indigenous Knowledge (TIK)

A cumulative body of knowledge, know-how, practices and representations maintained and developed by peoples with extended histories of interaction with the natural environment.

It is important in AI/AN cultures to let people tell their whole story uninterrupted. It is also especially important to listen carefully to Elders and Knowledge Keepers who are mindful of their words and take their time when sharing wisdom and counsel. There are many cues to watch for when communicating with or listening to stories from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Watch for the pauses, allow the time for quiet breaks in conversations. It is not a time to interrupt, offer answers, or change the subject.

In active listening, you need more than ears, you listen with your heart. That is to say that many listeners are listening to react or respond, where active listening is listening with the heart, not to respond. This is a skill that can be learned by using motivational techniques like, maintaining empathy, avoiding argumentation, roll with resistance, and support self-efficacy. Listen rather than talk, communi-

cate respectfully and for acceptance. Rolling with resistance prevents a breakdown in communication between participant and counselor and allows the participant to explore her views.

- Avoid arguing for change.
- Do not directly oppose resistance.
- New perspectives are offered but not imposed.
- The participant is a primary resource in finding answers and solutions.
- Resistance is a signal for the counselor to respond differently.

Self-efficacy is a crucial component to facilitating change. If a participant believes that she has the ability to change, the likelihood of change occurring is greatly increased.

## PRACTICE: MY CREATION STORY

All tribes have unique creation stories. Creation stories come from our ancestors, from the Creator and are passed on to every generation, so we will understand where we began, how we navigate the world and how to be in right relation with all creation and share ancestral knowledge and Natural Law. These stories inform us on how to act, how to behave, of our roles, and share important information about our community and tribal values. They teach us about the qualities of a good relative. The Indigenous people of the land base known as North America have creation stories about their tribes.

Spend some time researching your Tribe/Nation/Ethnic Origin to research your Creation Story. You can draw, write a poem or song, or write your Creation Story. Be creative, take some healthy risks to create something special. Identify a character in the Creation story that you connect with. Think about the following questions:

- What/who is the character?
- What do they represent in the story?
- What moral or value did you learn from the story?
- Using the "Myself, my family, my community, tribe/nation" activity to build on, add yourself to the creation story.
- What character would you play, how would you be a good relative?

# BUILD A BUNDLE

Bundles are a collection of things needed for our survival and well-being that are wrapped in a hide or cloth. The bundle could be for an individual or a larger one for a community. The bundle contained practical objects such as a knife, food, medicine, flint to make fire, sinew, fishing hooks. The bundle could also contain sacred items for use in ceremony such as tobacco for an offering, sage for smudge to protect us, or certain stones known to repel bad medicine. Modern bundles might reflect current technology to include a portable solar panel to charge a phone, epi pens for allergic reactions, charcoal filters for water, and waterproof matches. Bundles vary across tribes. Some bundles are small like the medicine bag and worn around the neck, often hidden from plain sight.



Being a good relative means that sometimes we will use our bundle to help another. We might need some of our bundle items to pray for another or for yourself.

## PRACTICE: MAKE A MEDICINE BAG

*This project usually takes about 45 minutes.*

### MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- A 12-inch round piece of tanned leather, buckskin, deerskin, rabbit, etc.
- A smaller three- to four-inch square or oblong piece of leather. You can recycle old leather purses, jackets, and clothes to use for your material if you don't have tanned hide available.
- A leather hole punch. If you do not have a leather hole punch you can use a sturdy sewing needle. Using a needle slows down the process but it still doesn't take very long. Use a thimble to help push your needle through the leather.
- Two or so feet of waxed, or other strong, thread.
- A small amount of herbs (sage, rosemary, cedar, tobacco, cornmeal/pollen, etc.), and/or small talisman that has meaning for you (stone, figure, etc.), to place inside the completed medicine bag. *(Be creative and use something that means something to you, an object that brings you comfort and solace.)*

## INSTRUCTIONS

First, we will make the lace that goes around your neck. Take the 12-inch-round leather and with a slow and steady hand, begin cutting around the perimeter, ¼-inch in from the edge. When you come full circle to your starting point, drop down another ¼-inch and go around again, and again, and again...until you have a leather lace long enough to hang the medicine bag around your neck. The lace I cut for my bag is approximately two feet long.

Now pick up the smaller piece of leather, fold it in half and cut it in whatever shape you decide you want your medicine bag to be. Pictured above, is a bag I made recently. You will see that it is an oblong shape with rounded edges. You can leave the sides square if you like, making it easier to line up the hole punch holes.

Take your folded piece of leather and punch holes through both sides, using the smallest setting on your punch, placing them as close together as possible. I have included instructions below for you to add fringe to the bottom of your bag for a funkier look.

Thread your needle with the waxed thread and stitch your bag together, making sure to line up the holes correctly. Pull your stitches tight and make sure to tie off the thread securely and tightly so it won't unravel on you.

Turn the bag inside out.

If your bag is square or rectangular, accordion the top corners. Put your hole punch on a setting that will make a hole large enough to allow the leather lacing to go through it. Punch a hole through the accordioned edge. This will create four holes. Do this on both sides of the bag. If you have chosen a rounded top, don't accordion the edges, simply make four holes, two each lined up on both sides.

Place your medicines and/or small talisman in the bag, cushioning the harder objects with the herbs and weeds.

Thread the leather lace through the four holes created in the accordioned edge, pull tight. Without cutting your leather, thread it through the four holes you created with your hole punch on the second accordioned edge, making sure to leave an equal length of lacing on both sides so the bag will hang evenly when you place it around your neck. Pull the leather tightly, take both sides of the leather lacing and gently but firmly tie them together.

*Ta-da!* You have created a Native American medicine bag to wear around your neck to protect and comfort you. A medicine bag is a quick and meaningful gift you can make for friends, family and loved ones.

Before you punch holes in your leather, separate the front and back pieces by cutting them at the bottom. Measure the bottom of your bag then cut a small piece of leather approximately ¼-inch narrower than the bottom of your bag, in a rectangular shape. Carefully make three or so evenly spaced cuts up the leather, making sure not to cut completely through the top, leave ¼-inch intact on one end.

Place the fringe you have just created between the two pieces of leather you are using to make your medicine bag, intact end between the two bottom pieces of your bag, the cut ends protruding from the top of the bag.

Using your hole punch on the smallest setting, hold all three pieces in place and go around the edge making holes as close together as possible without breaking into one another. Make sure to pull your stitches tight.

Turn your bag inside out and you will see you have created a decorative fringe hanging off the bottom of your bag.

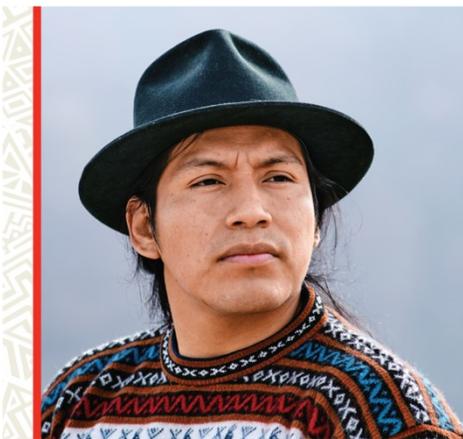
# SELF, COMMUNITY, AND SPIRITUAL CARE

We are living through difficult times and must take care of ourselves and each other. To be good relatives. As compassionate, empathetic caregivers we are at risk for vicarious trauma. Trauma is stored in the brain and so is healing. Audre Laura stated, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare."

First and foremost, it is important to honor your compassion. It is unsettling but normal to feel sad and anxious because you have absorbed some of the sorrow and trauma of people unknown to you through hearing their stories. Your empathetic and sympathetic responses are evidence of your compassion and humanity, and perhaps your own experience with loss.

**Self-care** is about the individual caring for their own basic physical needs. Not to be confused with current "wellness movements." Self-care is the act of caring for your own basic needs. It is a way to support yourself during times of ease and times of struggle.

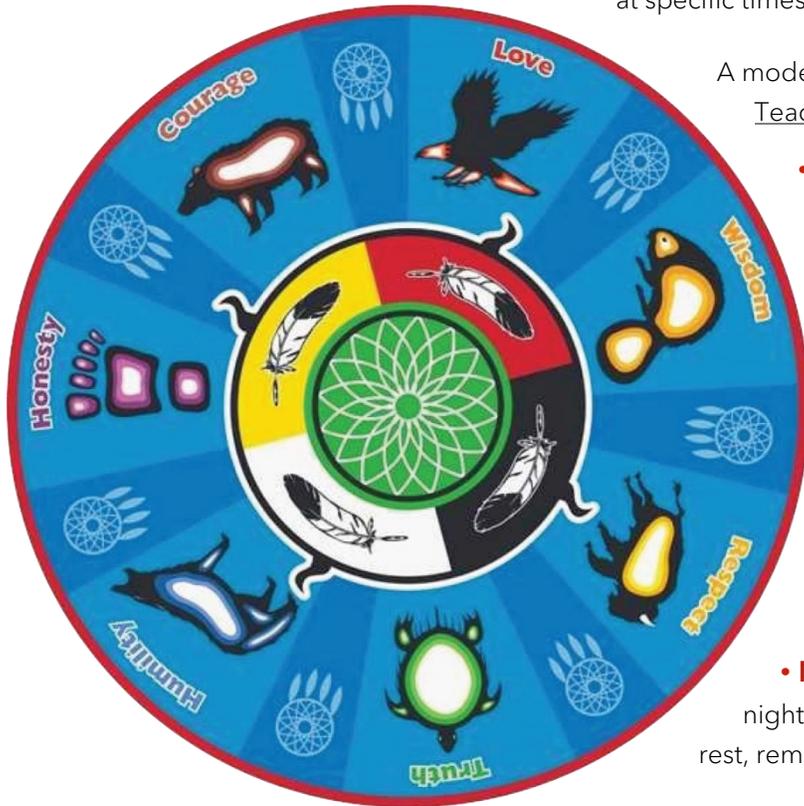
**Community care** is when we focus on the collective. Humans are social creatures and the best medicine we have as AI/AN people is each other. Caring for one another. This can be a large community or a community of two people. Community care involves more than one person. It can include two, three, or possibly hundreds of people. You can practice community care in your personal offline life or even in digital spaces.



"Community care can look like a lot of different things," Valerio says. "It can be as simple as reaching out to somebody over text when you just need someone to talk to. It can be someone grabbing groceries for you or...somebody coming and doing your dishes and watching your kids while you're grieving." Minimizing social isolation and turning to a community for support is a critical ingredient in mental health.

Shane Eynon, PhD is multiracial and descends from Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee people. He is a veteran, father, husband, brother, son, and also a clinician. Shane often shares with his clients how we live in a society that wants people to be symptom free and to be able to operate in the world. This country does not permit a traumatized person to do what the brain and body are designed to do: when injured we must stop. The injured wants to hide and find a place of safety. When in this safe place we can then think and feel our way out. The ritual of having a witness is where we heal. (S. Eynon. *Personal Communication*, August 2022.)

**Spiritual care** is utilizing resources from spiritual, religious, and/or cultural traditions to help people find a sense of meaning, belonging, purpose, well-being, and connection with something outside of ourselves, supporting people as they cope with their life experiences. In many tribal communities there are teachings from each of the four seasons. Winter, for example, teaches us about rest, is the time for story sharing and making art. Time for dreaming and visioning. Time of the ancestors. In some tribal traditions only certain stories are allowed at specific times.



A model of spiritual care from the Seven Grandfather Teachings (Anishinaabe):

- **EAST**—mental, knowledge, mind, water, spring, daytime, new beginnings, children & babies, where we start prayer/ceremony, tobacco
- **SOUTH**—physical, wind/air, summer, plants coming alive, youth (teenagers/young adults), discovering purpose & direction, compassion, woman's direction, cedar
- **WEST**—emotions, earth, autumn, adulthood, ripening & harvesting, endings, evening, courage, reminder that change is part of life, sage
- **NORTH**—spiritual, fire, Winter, time of Elders, night, generosity, share stories and teachings, time of rest, remember our ancestors, sweetgrass

# SELF, COMMUNITY, AND SPIRITUAL CARE TOOLS AND PRACTICES, AKA GOOD MEDICINE

## **PRAYER/MINDFULNESS/CONTEMPLATION/MEDITATION/DEEP BREATH**

Connect to a sense of wonder, awe, to something bigger than you. Prayer can be singing, smudging, talking, listening, breathing, dancing, drumming, ceremony, a hike. Mindfulness practice—focusing on breath or a word to return to the present moment.

## **CREATE**

Write, paint, dance, sing, draw, bead, weave, plant a garden, make some babies, design a skirt, sew a new wardrobe.

## **ANCESTRAL CONNECTION**

They love you, they miss you, they prayed for you to be here, we are the descendants of survivors, they can hear you.

## **SACRED SPACE**

Ceremony, church, temple, house of worship, altar building, time outdoors, visits to traditional sites, collecting first foods & plant medicines, on a sports field or court, In a barn, on a farm, or a sacred space in your home.

## **STORYTELLING/STORY LISTENING**

Story is medicine, we cannot tell stories without also knowing how to listen deeply, meditation, ritual, ceremony, reading to your children and having them read to you.

## PRACTICE: CREATE SELF, COMMUNITY, AND SPIRITUAL CARE PLAN

Create a plan that identifies your self-care, community care and spiritual care needs, in areas of your life that are important to you. To start this care plan, take a few slow deep breaths to get grounded and centered, make a prayer or offering if you feel called to that. Take a scan of your body, mind, heart, and spirit. Make note of how you feel, but do not linger in any one area. Then take a moment to think about what it feels like to feel good, whole, well, and in balance. Note if there are areas that are out of balance. You are welcome to create this care plan in any way that feels good to you, it can be a list, a drawing, poetry or song, or a story. You are also welcome to use the medicine wheel to help develop the plan. The following questions are only offered as suggestions.

### SELF CARE

- What does self-care mean to you?
- What are some daily practices that you can bring to your life?
- Identify three daily rituals, practices, or ceremonies you, either currently do, or would add to your daily/weekly/monthly practice (daily smudge, weekly yoga, monthly ceremony).

### COMMUNITY CARE

- What does community care mean to you?
- Who in your community can reach out for support (crisis support, daily check in, work buddy, Elder, or Knowledge Keeper). Here are some examples of [Eco Mapping](#).
- Identify two to three people you can call for each level of need, add their name and contact information.

### SPIRITUAL CARE

- What does spiritual care mean to you?
- How will you take care of yourself emotionally, spiritually, mentally, in relationships, financially, physically, in your personal and communal spaces, with work/life balance, etc.)?

- What are some cultural activities you currently engage in, or you are interested in, (daily, weekly, monthly, seasonally).
- It is important to give back to your community. Identify an activity you would like to engage in to give back to your community (checking in on an elder, volunteering, engaging in support of a non-profit organization, etc.).

This is a living document that is meant as a resource for you. Add resources as needed; as you grow and change, so will your care plan.

# THANKSGIVING: GRATITUDE

A core teaching among many tribes is related to being thankful, expressing gratitude for all that Creator has given us. This is how we communicate our acknowledgement and appreciation to Creator and/or the compassionate spirits, ancestors, and other helpers of their presence and help. We can express our gratitude through words, song, dance, ceremony. We honor Natural Law when we express gratitude. Natural Law of give and take. As we take the information shared, we give thanks. The Haudenosaunee Ganö:nyök–[Thanksgiving Address](#), is an example.

Season 2, Episode 4 of *Reservation Dogs* on FX/Hulu, includes tribal humor as it touches upon the very serious issues related to prayer, giving thanks and use of a spirit plate. The practice that follows includes more teachings and explanation for use of the spirit plate.

## PRACTICE: SPIRIT PLATE

Spirit plate is one way that AI/AN people offer gratitude to our ancestors and to Mother Earth. A spirit plate can be set out daily, but can be done at any time or at special occasions. These offerings can consist of traditional foods, foods we know our ancestors loved to eat, tobacco, or whatever is being served at an event or ceremony. Danica's grandmother loved orange candy and her mother loved blue corn pudding, so she offers this as part of the plate. But the spirit plate can contain anything that you have. The spirit plate is created and offered before the people eat, as it represents the gratitude, we offer to all who suffer, to remember the cycles of life, and all the Nations across the earth to have enough food and water. The offering is placed in the ground, near a sapling or tree. When you place your offering down, take a moment to set an intention and offer a prayer and offer thanks to the ancestors for guiding, protecting, and loving us. Offer a prayer in whatever ways work best for you, chanting, singing, words, silence, tears, laughter....all prayers are heard when they are born of gratitude.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Historical Trauma:** Results from the long-term effects of the oppressive traumatizing policies, attitudes, and beliefs of the colonizer towards AI/AN people; the lack of resources and opportunities for AI/AN People; and current treatment of AI/AN people in the United States. Yellow Horse Brave Heart (2004) defines historical trauma as "...cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma" (pg. 4), and Duran (2006) refers to this as "soul wounding."

**Tribal Sovereignty:** 573 sovereign tribal nations (tribes, nations, bands, pueblos, communities, and Native villages) have a formal nation-to-nation relationship with the United States government. These tribal governments are legally defined as "federally recognized tribes." Sovereignty, simply, is the authority to self-govern. Hundreds of treaties, along with the Supreme Court, the President, and Congress, have repeatedly affirmed that Tribal Nations retain their inherent powers of self-governance. These treaties, executive orders, and laws have created a fundamental contract between tribes and the United States.

**Trust Responsibility:** The trust doctrine is a source of federal responsibility to Tribal Nations requiring the federal government to support Tribal self-government and economic prosperity, duties that stem from the government's treaty guarantees to protect Tribal Nations and respect their sovereignty. The federal Tribal trust responsibility is also a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the United States to protect tribal treaty rights, lands, assets, and resources, as well as a duty to carry out the mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages. (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/>)

**Self-Determination:** The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA), also known as Public Law 93-638, authorizes Tribal Nations and Tribal Organizations to contract for the administration and operation of certain Federal programs which provide services to Indian Tribes and their members. (<https://www.ihs.gov/selfgovernance/>)

**Tribal Reservation:** In the United States there are three types of reserved federal lands: military, public, and Indian. A federal Indian reservation is an area of land reserved for a tribe or tribes under treaty or other agreement with the United States, executive order, or federal statute or administrative action as permanent tribal homelands, and where the federal government holds title to the land in trust on behalf of the tribe.

**Seventh Generation:** The Seventh Generation takes its name from the Great Law of the Haudenosaunee, the founding document of the Iroquois Confederacy, the oldest living participatory democracy on Earth. It is based on an ancient Iroquois philosophy that: "In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

**Survivance:** Vizenor (1994) defines survivance as “an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. AI/AN survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy, and victimry. Survivance means the right of succession or reversion of an estate, and in that sense, the estate of native survivancy” (pg. vii).

# RESOURCES

**988**—Text or dial 9-8-8 to be connected to trained crisis counselors if you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health and/or substance use related crisis.

**Crisis Text Line 741741**—Text any word or symbol to 741741. Trained responders will text you to support you. Users report using the text line to prevent having a crisis. Examples include texting the line if you are anxious, having trouble sleeping, experiencing relationship issues, feeling overwhelmed, or needing to process.

**We Matter Campaign** is a Canadian, Indigenous youth-led organization dedicated to Indigenous youth, support, hope, and life promotion, and is relevant to tribal people in the US as well.

**We R Native**—Site for Indigenous youth by Indigenous youth. Includes cultural teachings, prevention information, advice, sexual health, self-care, and videos.

**Native Wellness Institute**—Longstanding tribal non-profit comprised of Indigenous wisdom keepers and wellness advocates. Site contains resources for wellness, tribal teachings, and support.

**White Bison**—Based in Colorado Springs and facilitator of the Wellbriety Movement. White Bison provides sobriety, recovery, addictions prevention, and wellness/Wellbriety learning resources to the Native American/Alaskan Native community nations. Site includes access to online 12-step meetings.

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**—This site can connect you with supports, resources, and information related to those with mental illness.

**National Federation of Families**—Site for families with children who are experiencing imbalance and in need of complex supports.

**YouTube** is a great resource for finding funny videos such as from the 1491s. Also, search for music that promotes sleep, reduces anxiety, and reduces stress.

**Culture Card**, available from SAMHSA. This folding, pocket card is designed to give the reader information to promote understanding of tribal culture.

**Hiding In Plain Sight**—PBS Film Series on Youth Mental Illness (caution: might trigger some) is considered a must-see film and Includes American Indian representation. There are two episodes that thoroughly explore the onset, issues, treatment, and resiliency among those who experience a need for mental health services.

**Healthy Native Youth** is a one-stop-shop for educators and health advocates who want to expand learning opportunities for youth.

**Responding to Concerning Messages** is webinar training that will prepare adults who work with Native youth to identify peers who post or view concerning posts on social media, and connect them to appropriate services.

**First Nations Youth Suicide Prevention Curriculum** is experiential and includes detailed guidelines for teachers as well as all required materials for in-class activities such as group discussions, quizzes, games, and other projects that provide opportunities for each youth participant to journal their journey of resilience and well-being.

# REFERENCES

- Boven, K. and Morohashi, J. (2002). *Best Practices Using Indigenous Knowledge*. Joint Publication by Nuffic, The Hague, The Netherlands and UNESCO/MOST, Paris, France.
- Boven, K. and Morohashi, J. (2002). International Council for Science/Conseil International pour la Science (March 2002). *Science and Traditional Knowledge: Report from the ICSU Study Group on Science and Traditional Knowledge*.
- Duran, E. (2006). *Healing the soul wound: Counseling with American Indians and other Native peoples*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Personal Communication*, Shane Eynon, PhD (August, 2022).
- Hume, K. (2007). *Gerald Vizenor's Metaphysics*. *Contemporary Literature*, 48(4), 580-612.
- Nelson, M. (2008). *About Bioneers*. (pg. xvii-xviii). Nelson, M. (Ed.). (2008). *Original instructions: Indigenous teachings for a sustainable future*. Inner Traditions/Bear & Co.
- Vizenor, G. (1994). *Manifest manners: Narratives on postindian survivance*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Yellow Horse Brave Heart, M. (2004). *The historical trauma response among Natives and its relationship to substance abuse: A Lakota illustration*. In E. Nebelkopf & M. Phillips (Eds.), *Healing and mental health for Native Americans: Speaking in red*. (pg. 7-18). Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press. Also in *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 35(1), 7-13.