

**ABORIGINAL CULTURAL GUIDE
CSC – PACIFIC REGION**

**PACIFIC REGION
ABORIGINAL INITIATIVES
CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA
SEPTEMBER, 2004
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TABLE OF CONTENT

Title	Page
Table of Content	2
Introduction	3
Section 1 – Ceremonies	5
Smudging Ceremony	5
Sacred Pipe Ceremony	6
Searching the Offender’s Personal Spiritual Effects	7
Sundance Ceremony	9
Moon Time	10
Sweat Lodge Ceremony	11
Women’s Sweat Lodge Ceremony	13
Fasting Ceremony	14
Sacred Circles including Resolution Circles	15
Longhouse Ceremony	18
Cedar Cleansing Ceremony	19
Potlatch Ceremony	19
Water Bath Ceremony	19
Big Drum	19
Pow Wow	20
Section 1 Closing Comments	21
Section 2 – Definitions	23
Elder	23
Spiritual Advisor	23
Healers	24
Pipe Carriers	24
Who Makes the Pipes/Pipestone	25
Who conducts Sweat Lodges	26
Medicine Bags	26
Spirit Keepers	27
Offender’s Personal Spiritual Effects Contents	27
Hair (Cut)	28
Definitions of Indian, First Nations, Inuit, Metis	28
Contact Information	29
Section 3 – Medicine Wheel Teachings	29
Inuit Spirituality by Sarah Anala	38
Appendix	
Primer on Aboriginal Issues	43
Traditional Food List	52
Offender’s Personal Spiritual Effects Form	
British Columbia Bands	53
British Columbia Languages	55

INTRODUCTION

This Cultural Guide was developed by Sharron Whitewolf John, Regional Elder for the Pacific Region and is intended for Management and Staff working within federal institutions in the Pacific Region, Correctional Service Canada.

The guide is meant to help those who may not be familiar with the material and practices involved in Aboriginal Culture/Spirituality as it is practiced within the federal institutions in the Pacific Region.

There are a number of ceremonies and spiritual activities that take place within most federal institutions where Aboriginal offenders are incarcerated or on Escorted Temporary/Unescorted Temporary passes. Among the most common are the Sweat Lodge ceremonies, Pipe ceremonies, Smudging ceremonies, Sundance, Moon ceremonies, Puberty Rites, Naming ceremonies, Fasting, Sacred Circles, Teaching Circles, Resolution Circles, Water Baths, Cedar cleansing and Longhouse and Potlatch ceremonies.

This guide will cover these subjects and also other areas of Native Spirituality, which you may not be familiar with. It is important to keep in mind that there are many other ceremonies and activities that are not covered. In the case of any confusion or serious questions as to what a ceremony or activity may consist of, or about the material being used, please feel free to seek the advise of the Elder (Spiritual Advisor) in your institution or the Regional Elder for the Pacific Region.

One of the biggest misunderstandings concerns the different styles of ceremonies being performed. There are as many forms and practices of Native Spirituality as there are different tribes and nations of Aboriginals across this continent. Teachings, while similar, may vary from Elder to Elder and /or from territory to territory.

Just as there are many forms and practices associated with Christianity, there is no "one right way" to practice Native Spirituality. Each individual follows the teachings of the Elders from their locality and then proceeds to learn where they fit into the spiritual picture by using the ceremonies to communicate with the Creator on a spiritual and personal level.

At the present time the largest percentage of Aboriginal offenders in federal institutions follow what is commonly called the Sweat Lodge or Prairie teachings.

In the Pacific Region these teachings are rapidly becoming common among all First Nations people. Many Coast Salish, Island, Interior, Northern, Yukon and N.W.T. Aboriginal people practice the ceremonies along side of the Prairie people and find solace and peace within the Sweat Lodge/Prairie teachings.

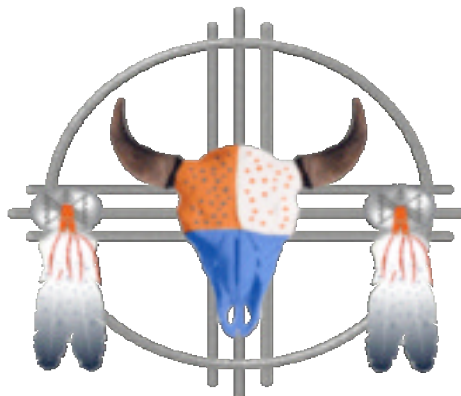
Recently a number of non-native people have also been drawn to these teachings and everyone is always welcome to participate as long as they remain free of drugs and alcohol for a certain number of days prior to a ceremony or receiving teachings, and approach the teachings with an open and positive mind and heart.

The descriptions in this guide are meant to help you understand the most common ceremonies practiced within the correctional system, but are in no way to be viewed as a complete primer on Aboriginal Spirituality/Culture. Our Elders have spent a lifetime learning their teachings and ceremonies and will tell you that they are also still learning.

In the Correctional Service Canada Mission Core Statement (Core Value 1), it states that "We will accommodate, within the boundaries of the law, the cultural and religious needs of individuals and minority groups, provided the rights of others are not impinged upon." The stated objective in Core Value 1.7 is to "Respect the social, cultural and religious differences of individual offenders."

In keeping with the Mission Statement, Visions has compiled this manual to help you become familiar with the concepts, ceremonies and beliefs that are part of the teachings that guide Aboriginal offenders on their Spiritual/Healing journey.

Visions would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by many Aboriginal Spiritual people, Prairie, Longhouse, Potlatch, Inuit and Metis. Special thanks to Sarah Anala, Elder Atlantic Region, for her presentation on Inuit Spirituality and to Jane Whiting, Ferndale Institution, for her drawing of the Medicine Wheel. My thanks also to John Stonechild an Elder from the Prairie Region for his input.



SECTION 1 - CEREMONIES

SMUDGING CEREMONY

Smudging is the practice of using certain types of medicines (natural herbs) to clean our mind, body, spirit and emotions, in order to remove negative thoughts and purify us for prayer or communication with the Creator.

The most common articles used in this ceremony are the herbs (sage, sweet grass, tobacco, certain types of fungus, cedar and juniper), a smudge bowl or container (usually an abalone shell, carved piece of rock or another type of shell) and a feather (most often an eagle feather).

When the smudge is lit (usually with a wood match or hot coal from a fire if on the Sweat Lodge grounds) it causes the release of smoke into the air. The smoke from the herb is then used to symbolically clean the body, spirit and mind to help the person reach a positive place.

The odour differs depending on what type of smudge is used. All smudges have one thing in common, you must keep fanning them with the feather or in the case of Sweet Grass moving it back and forth, in order to keep them burning, otherwise the slow burning material loses its spark. It is therefore less dangerous than a cigarette in this respect, as an unattended-lit cigarette will continue to burn, while smudges will not.

When the smudge is lit and prepared, the person or persons participating in the ceremony then draws this smoke over their bodies, thereby cleaning themselves spiritually.

None of the herbs used during these ceremonies are addictive or mind altering in any negative or illegal way.

This ceremony is an important part of Native Spirituality, therefore individuals should be free to use this ceremony whenever they feel the need to pray or seek balance and harmony in their lives. Smudging is a very effective way for a person to deal with anger, frustration, depression or grief. During the smudge the person is seeking peace, balance and harmony. (See Medicine Wheel Teachings in this guide for further information.)

The ceremony is also performed during group meetings such as the Sacred Circle, meetings, when preparing to attend a Sweat Lodge ceremony or at any time a group



of people feel the need to come together as one in order to participate in some function or activity in a good and positive manner.

The burning of the different plant materials is in no way harmful either to the person smudging or in regards to second hand smoke to others nearby.

SACRED PIPE CEREMONY

Sacred Pipes are used for private and group prayers and ceremonies. Both men and women may be Pipe Carriers. The Pipe is not a personal possession. It belongs to everyone who asks for its help in a good and positive way.

The holder of the Sacred Pipe is considered its custodian, not its owner. The Pipe Carrier is honor bound to protect the Pipe in their custody at all times. This protection takes the form of the Pipe Carrier always being clean of all "Bad Medicines" (Drugs, alcohol, negative thoughts and feelings) and that they remain available to all who need the healing of the Sacred Pipe ceremony.

In the Pipe Ceremony participants gather in a circle. A Smudge ceremony is held to unite the circle and prepare the people to come to the Sacred Pipe.

The Pipe Ceremony is basically a prayer ceremony. The prayers might be for one of the participants, for someone far away or for someone who has gone to the Spirit World. It is also used to pray for guidance or to pray for other groups of people who are participating in some Sacred Ceremony, such as Fasting or Sun Dancing.

It is a firm belief that the Pipe Ceremony can bring peace of mind and strength to those who participate in a good and honourable way.

The tobacco that is used in the Sacred Pipe is usually a combination of natural tobacco and herbs mixed together. Each Pipe Carrier has their own blend for use in their ceremonies. None of these blends are mind altering or illegal.

The National Council of Elders has affirmed that offenders, who are still incarcerated, will not be allowed to carry a Sacred Pipe during their incarceration. It was also the decision of the National Council of Elders that offenders not be allowed to make Pipes while incarcerated, for this reason Red Pipe stone (catlinite), is not allowed in the institutions.

Offenders that come into the institutions with Pipes in their effects will have the Pipe put in their personal effects and it will be returned to them upon release or they may decide to have a family member or Elder take the Pipe out of the institution. Catlinite or red Pipe Stone will be handled in the same manner.

The Pipe and Pipe Bundle itself are the most Sacred articles that a Native person can carry. It may be compared to the altar of a church. It must therefore be treated with the same respect.

Offenders Personal Spiritual Effects: (PREVIOUSLY REFERRED TO AS SACRED BUNDLE)

The following procedures regarding the searching of an offender's personal spiritual effects will be in effect for all institutions in the Pacific Region.

- 1. When entering an institution no offender will be allowed to bring their personal spiritual effects into the institution until the Elder has inspected it. If the offender transfers into the institution at a time when the Elder is not available, the offender's personal spiritual effects will be held in A & D until such time as the Elder is available.**
- 2. The institution Elder, with the ALO or another staff member will inspect and list every item in the offender's personal spiritual effects on the approved form.**
- 3. Any item that the Elder deems inappropriate to keep in the personal spiritual effects will be removed from the personal spiritual effects and it will be the responsibility of Security to designate the item as either contraband or an unauthorized item.**
- 4. If the item is deemed to be contraband, it will be disposed of as per the policies of CSC and the institution.**
- 5. If the item is deemed to be an unauthorized item it will be placed in the offender's personal effect and kept in A&D or the offender may make arrangements to have the item sent out of the institution using the current policy governing the removal of such items from the institution.**
- 6. Elders will not remove any items from the institution.**
- 7. Three copies of the personal spiritual effects list will be made, one to go to the offender to be kept with their personal spiritual effects at all times, one to the Elder, to be kept in the Elder's office and one to be kept in an appropriate institution department.**
- 8. Every time an item is added to the offender's personal spiritual effects list during the offender's incarceration, the Elder will add that item to all three personal spiritual effects lists and initial**

that item. (Note: This does not apply to smudge material supplied by the institution Elder)

- 9. The procedures that will be used for the searching of personal spiritual effects by staff will be as follows:**
 - a. If personal spiritual effects must be searched, the offender will handle the items, showing each item for inspection.**
 - b. If the offender is not available the Elder, at the request of the institution, will handle the items in the personal spiritual effects showing each item for visual inspection.**
 - c. In the event neither the offender or the Elder is available the the personal spiritual effects will be put into a bag/box, without touching the items, and held in the Correctional Supervisors office or another secure area, until such time as a proper inspection by the Elder can be conducted.**
 - d. All institutions, in consultation with the Elder, will determine some manner of marking each cell door where the offender has personal spiritual effects.**
 - e. If for any reason contraband or unauthorized items are found to be in the offender's personal spiritual effects, those personal spiritual effects will be placed in the care of the Elder, minus the contraband or unauthorized item, and will be kept in the Elder's office or another secure area until such time as the Elder decides it should be returned to the offender.**





SUNDANCE CEREMONY

The Sundance is celebrated in the late summer, usually on or near the Summer Solstice at the full moon and the actual ceremony will last for four days. The preparations to attend a Sundance may last for a year. As during that year the participants are expected to pray, meditate and fast in preparation for the Sundance and attend Sweat Lodge ceremonies to purify themselves.

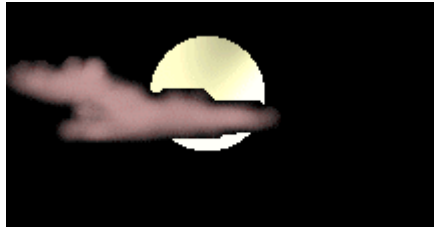
Piercing is the most sacred part of the Sundance as it represents the sacrifice one makes for the people. Not all of the men who dance are pierced, as some have already completed their commitments to be pierced and others have not yet made that commitment. Men and women will sometimes make flesh offering as their personal sacrifice and this sacrifice can be made by those participating in the Sundance and those who are there to support the participants.

The men and women who participate in the Sundance stay in the Sundance Arbor for four days, fasting, dancing, praying and mediating. Each day may begin with a Sweat Lodge ceremony for purification and prayers for strength, this part of the ceremony depends on what territory the Sundance is being held in and upon the teachings of the persons responsible for the Sundance.

The Sundance represents continuity between life and death. It shows that there is no true end to life, but instead a circle of lives and deaths that all-living things must pass through. Example: Leaving childhood for adulthood. It represents all nature being intertwined and dependent on one another.

It is a spiritual rebirth for the participants and their families. The participants use sacrifice and prayers to ask for harmony between all living things.

Offenders who have earned the right to Spiritual/Cultural passes, either escorted or unescorted, may sometimes take part in these ceremonies.



MOON TIME

It is a strong teaching in Native Spirituality that women who are on their monthly menstruation cycle, NEVER COME NEAR OR TOUCH SACRED ITEMS OR WALK UPON SACRED SITES SUCH AS THE SWEAT LODGE GROUNDS.

When an Aboriginal woman has her "Moon Time", it is a very personal time for her. She approaches this time from a different set of teachings than those of the non-native woman. This time is seen as a gift from the Creator. A time to center ones self and keep to ones self. It is her power time.

During the bleeding time, women went to the Moon Lodge to pray, seek visions, sing, bead, chant, and dream. It was known by our ancestors, that during the "Moon Time", the veil between the world of illusion, where we live, and the real world, the Spirit place, is the thinnest. It is at this time that a woman may easily cross from here to there. As she crosses, she brings back with her the vision of where she has been, and what she has seen, heard and felt.

Traditionally the "Moon Time" is the Sacred Time of Women, when they are honored as the Mothers of Creation. During this time a woman is releasing the old energy from her body and preparing to receive the new. Like the pull of Grandmother Moon and the tides of the oceans, the power of women at this time, pull all things Sacred to her and rids herself of all things old and negative. It is seen by Aboriginal people as a woman's time of power .

Even though today we understand the biological function, as it pertains to the menstrual cycle, most traditional men and women still hold to the belief that a woman holds much power at this time of the month. This power can weaken or take away the power from the Sacred objects of a man.

If possible women staff should try to respect these teachings whenever possible, either by having someone who is not on her "moon time" conduct searches where necessary or asking a male officer to conduct that part of the search that involves Sacred items or Sacred places; keeping in mind that the safety of the institution and the people within the institution must always come first.

SWEAT LODGE CEREMONY

The Sweat Lodge is used in purification ceremonies, healing ceremonies or to begin and end a Vision Quest/Fast. It is important in Native Spirituality to keep ones self continually in touch with both our inner self and the Creator.

The Sweat Lodge ceremony is a more involved and complete version of the Smudging Ceremony. Each separate First Nations tribe (such as Cree, Sioux, etc.) have a different traditional form that is used to conduct their ceremonies, depending upon where a Lodge keeper is from or who their teachers were. All are correct and each one is to be respected in our culture.

It has been said by the old ones, that the Sweat Lodge is the oldest ceremony among North American traditional Natives. The ceremony is a purification rite in which individuals can gain balance "within themselves". The Sweat Lodge is a dome shaped construction framed with willow saplings and covered with canvas, hides and/or blankets. The dome may vary in height and circumference depending on the particular territory or Elder who is constructing the Lodge, however, most are sized to accommodate 10 to 20 individuals. A sacred fire is built in front of the lodge where the stones (lava rocks), representing the Grandfather and Grandmother spirits (very old and wise), are heated in the wood fire. The sacred fire represents the healing force that cleanse the negative spirits that may dwell within a person. The number and location of doors a lodge has will depend on the region, the cultural heritage, as well as the type of ceremony being conducted in the lodge (for example: a healing ceremony, thanksgiving ceremony, truth-telling ceremony, dream interpretation ceremony). Inside the Lodge is a pit in the centre where the stones from the fire are placed. This hole has been said to be the door to Mother Earth whence she sends her blessings. It is also referred to as the womb, signifying returning to the womb and rebirth. The Grandfathers and Grandmothers bring healing, wisdom, and knowledge and take unto themselves our trials and tribulations.

Before attending a Sweat Lodge ceremony many will fast, sacrifice, and or pray. Prior to entering the lodge the Elder must be presented with tobacco and in some regions prayer flags or prayer ties so they are able to communicate to the spirit world on behalf of the individuals. As each person enters the Lodge, they are said to be re-entering the womb of Mother Earth. The participants sit around the pit, and the red-hot stones are brought in and placed in the center hole. As each "Grandfather" enters, they are welcomed and a mixture of the four sacred plants are placed on them creating a red sparking glow as they burn and produce a calming odor. The door to the Lodge is then covered over leaving the participants in darkness, with the exception of the glowing Grandfathers and Grandmothers, which slowly fade leaving total darkness.

The heat of the stones, heats the inside of the Lodge area, causing the participants to sweat. The Elder begins with a prayer and smokes the Sacred Pipe with its spiritual power and connections. Having honored creation the Elder then douses the red-hot rocks with water to produce steam. The water represents the continuous flow of the Creator's forgiving love to the people of the earth and the steam is called the sacred breath of the Creator. The vapors from the steam penetrate the mind, body, and spirit to expel illness and negativity. There is singing and chanting and the sounds of the drum, representing the heartbeat of Mother Earth, with the shaking of the rattles,

to summon the spirits to come and care for the people taking part in the ceremony. The Elder encourages each person to speak about the problem or request that has brought them to the ceremony. While people talk and pray about their struggles, the focus tends to be on others, giving thanks for others, praying for others, and asking for the forgiveness of others in a selfless manner. The theme is consistently about respect. Respect for Mother Earth and nature, respect for the Elders, respect for the traditional ways, respect for fellow offenders, respect for families, for women, and children, respect for people they have hurt, and a striving towards respect for themselves. As each person talks, the language they speak may vary. An observer would be struck with the level of openness, sincerity and emotion with which each participant talks about themselves, their lives, their behaviors, and the people and world around them.

After the first round is completed, the door to the lodge is opened, and the cool air comes in and creates a new sensation. In between rounds the atmosphere is casual and may shift from the serious introspective focus to lighthearted joking (humor is an important part of the process for some Elders) and relaxing in preparation for the next round. The ceremony consists of four rounds. More Grandfather lava rocks are placed in the lodge at the beginning of each round. The length and purpose of each round depends on the reason for the ceremony, the Elders own practices, and the territory they are from. The number of Grandfathers used has symbolic significance and the total number of stones used will depend again on the purpose of the Lodge and the Elder.

During the ceremony the combination of the heat, changes in temperature, the darkness, the aroma of the burning plants, and the sounds of the drum, song, chanting create an intense atmosphere in which the body, mind and spirit are barraged with a variety of sensory stimulation. The result is a feeling of release, calm, focus, and clarity. There is a strong sense of group cohesion and togetherness, yet there is an undeniable sensation of each persons own individuality. Upon completion of the ceremony, there is a feeling of serenity. Tensions, anxiety, anger, and fear have been expelled and are said to be left with the Grandfathers and Grandmothers. They are replaced by a positive energy and a contrast in feelings both of being drained and relaxed yet still invigorated and alert (physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually).

As can be seen, symbols are an important part of Aboriginal teachings and ceremony. It is important to note that these symbols are not worshipped, but are used for teaching and guidance. Symbols are heavily relied on as they remain the most effective way for people to express the abstract forces of nature and connect to and with the non-tangible aspects of our spirit.

In caring for the Sweat Lodge it is important that Lodge cover, (the tarps and blankets that are used to cover the Lodge during ceremony) must be taken off after each Lodge, aired out and stored in a safe, dry area. Most Elders take down their Lodges at the change of seasons (Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter) whenever possible and rebuild new ones. Grandfathers and Grandmothers rocks are removed from the institutions and returned to a resting place within nature out of respect for the work they have done in the healing process. This removal takes place when they become broken or the Elder feels it is necessary.

Within the Pacific Region institutions no mixed (male/female) Lodges are allowed. An Elder/Pipe Carrier must be present to conduct the ceremony. After the ceremony there is usually a small feast.

Whenever possible all searches of the Sweat Lodge grounds will be done in cooperation with the Elder/Spiritual Advisor of the institution. Ceremonies should never be interrupted unless it is imperative for the safety of all concerned.

It is extremely important, that where possible, the Sweat Lodge Ceremony not be disturbed or interrupted, no more than one would interrupt the services of a Catholic Mass, United Church service or the worship taking place in a Jewish Synagogue.

Once the fires are lit, someone must be in attendance upon the fire at all times. This person is usually called the Firekeeper or Doorkeeper. It is their responsibility to ensure that everything is set up as the Elder directs and that no negative influences are allowed to enter the Sweat Lodge grounds during the ceremony.

Sweat Lodge grounds are subject to searches when there is reason to believe that drugs or other contraband might be hidden on the grounds. Whenever possible a manual search will be done, however given certain circumstances the Search dogs may be utilized in accordance with the CCRA, CD and institutional search plan.



WOMEN'S SWEAT LODGE CEREMONIES

All of the conditions that are detailed in Sweat Lodge Ceremonies above apply to both men and women offenders.

Women offenders may also participate in Moon Lodges where permission has been obtained from the head of the institution.

Full moon Lodges are held in the evening just after the full moon has risen to honor the Grandmother Moon, pray for Mother Earth, the children of the world and women around the world. It is the time when the Elder gives teachings to the women on how our ancestors wish them to conduct themselves as women, wives, mothers, grandmothers, daughters and spiritual people.

Only women who are truly following their healing path are allowed to take part in these ceremonies. The Full Moon is a time when the moon is at its greatest strength. During the Full Moon Ceremony women ask and receive prayers for all intentions. Offerings of tobacco, tobacco ties and prints are made to give thanks for all life. This Women's ceremony is for healing and strength so that the women at the ceremony are able to re-center themselves. All female species give life and this is a time to pray to the Grandmother (Moon) to re-energize all female species. This is a time of celebration and honoring all our gifts that were given to us as women.



FASTING CEREMONIES

A person goes into Fast when they feel the need to sacrifice something, such as food, water, socialization and/or different combinations of these and other things, in order to put the individual in closer touch with their Creator.

In a Fast we are seeking to obtain balance with all creation in order to live in harmony with all things upon Mother Earth. There are many personal reasons for fasting and it is up to each individual to make the commitment they feel is necessary to achieve their goal.

It is important that the person who goes into Fast be left alone and in a quiet space as much as possible. Traditionally a person, who has pledged to complete a Fast, will ask an Elder/Spiritual Advisor to place them into Fast. This will usually consist of a Pipe Ceremony to make their commitment to the fast and a Sweat Lodge Ceremony to prepare them for the fast. Then will follow one to four days of complete solitude.

A "watcher" is usually assigned to check on the individual in Fast to assure that all is going well. When coming out of a Fast it is traditional to go into another Sweat Lodge Ceremony, which is followed by a feast of celebration.

The different security levels of the institutions will play some part in how Fasts are carried out within the institution where the offender is incarcerated. It is recommended that every institution make an effort to ensure that there is a Sacred place where Fasting can be conducted. In most institutions this will be on the Sweat Lodge grounds.

Fasting allows a person the time and circumstances to bring balance and harmony to their lives to deal with their deepest sorrows, grief, pain, shame and weaknesses. It gives them the means to refocus their lives in a positive way, therefore benefiting not

only themselves, but also those around them. Only an Elder should decide who is ready to go into Fast.



SACRED CIRCLES

Circles are not to be used to circumvent CSC rules and regulations, but are to provide an alternative manner of reviewing and resolving issues.

DEFINITIONS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF CIRCLES AS THEY PERTAIN TO CSC:

RESOLUTION CIRCLE:

PURPOSE: To resolve a specific issue in a way that is satisfactory to all parties involved.

There are a number of different ways that a Resolution Circle can be used within the context of CSC.

Where it involves an offender examples might include;

- **Minor offender offenses such as smoking in an unauthorized area**
- **Caught with unauthorized items (not contraband)**
- **Attitude issues**
- **Not fully complying with Correctional Plan**
- **Offender to offender issues**
- **Minor offender to staff issues**
- **Determining suitability of an offender to stay at a certain institution when the situation is borderline. (This does not cover serious institution problems/charges, inability to meet the institutions criteria for acceptance or incompatibility issues.)**
- **Serious incidents may be reviewed through a Resolution Circle at the direction of the Warden**

Where it involves staff examples might include;

- **Staff to staff minor disagreements**
- **Staff to management to address minor attitude issues**

HEALING CIRCLE:

PURPOSE: To deal with issues such as grief, disruption, loss, releasing feelings.

Examples might include;

- **Grieving over a death in the family where the offender is unable to attend the funeral**
- **Helping an offender to release grief through prayers in the Circle**

TEACHING CIRCLE:

PURPOSE: To discuss certain teaching and share ideas about the teaching so that everyone in the Circle can learn and grow on their Spiritual Path.

Examples might include;

- **One or more Elders coming together to give teachings to offenders, such as a teaching about respecting self and the environment around you**
- **Respect for the Sweat Lodge grounds**
- **Respect for the opposite sex**

SHARING CIRCLE:

PURPOSE: To share information in a supportive environment.

Examples might include;

- **When an offender has been involuntarily transferred from a lower security institution to a higher security institution a sharing circle would be held to advise the offender of what steps they must take to be returned to the lower security institution. This circle would take place after the transfer had been made in order to help the offender fully understand why the transfer took place and what must be accomplished for a return.**
- **When the situation warrants this circle may be held in the sending institution, if there is no immediate danger identified by security.**

CONDUCTING A RESOLUTION CIRCLE IN CSC:

- 1. All parties must willingly agree to participate in the Circle and abide by the resolution determined by the Circle.**
- 2. All Circles should be conducted by an Elder (If the institution Elder is involved in the resolution, then in a CSC setting the Regional Elder would be called to conduct the Circle. If the Resolution Circle involves only staff then the Regional Elder will conduct the Circle to maintain confidentiality.**
- 3. Parties who would participate**
The Elder conducting the Circle
All parties involved in the incident or issue
In the case of offender involvement, an example might be;
Offender, institutional Elder, IPO, Security, Unit Manager,

Management, any other parties directly impacted by the incident and if appropriate the Regional Elder.

- 4. The Circle begins with an opening prayer (Other ceremonies such as Smudging or Cedar cleansing might also be used when appropriate.)**
- 5. The Elder conducting the Circle explains that the Circle is not to speak negatively about any one person or accuse, but instead is intended to share how everyone feels about the incident and how it can be resolved to meet every body's needs, while still keeping within the regulations that govern CSC.**
- 6. The participants are then asked if they are all willing to abide by the resolution that the Circle comes up with, if the answer is yes then the Circle can start.**
- 7. The Elder explains that each person will be passed the Eagle feather (Talking Stick or Stone may also be used) and will have the opportunity to be heard without interruption. No one is to speak except the person holding the Eagle feather; however the Elder conducting the Circle may ask a question of the person speaking in order to clarify a point when deemed necessary.**
- 8. Round one is to let everyone tell how they felt when the incident occurred.**
- 9. Round two is to let everyone tell how they felt about what was shared in Round one.**
- 10. Round three is to give everyone a chance to tell how they feel the issue can be fairly resolved and what part they will play in resolving the issue.**
NOTE: This is why it is necessary to have Security and Management present in order to ensure that all CSC and institutional regulations are adhered to in the process.
- 11. The Elder conducting the Circle then takes all answers into consideration and repeats formally how the issue will be resolved.**
- 12. Round four is for everyone to commit on the resolution and give their final feelings.**
- 13. In the case of a Resolution Circle that involves an offender it is necessary to have a written contract or report signed by the offender as a reminder of the agreement and for future disciplinary problems if they arise. The outcome should be noted in the Case Work Records for the offender.**
- 14. The Circle closes with a prayer.**



LONGHOUSE CEREMONY

Ceremonial events of the West Coast people are usually conducted within the Longhouse sometimes call the Big House or Smokehouse. This is the place where the spirits dwell and the winter dancing (syewen) takes place.

When a person becomes what is usually referred to as "Indian Sick", it is commonly accepted that he or she will become a dancer in the near future. At this point they will be taken to the Longhouse and initiated as a new dancer. This process helps to release the grief, sorrow, pain of loss, addictions and negative behavior that they may have been experiencing and gives them a means to bring their life back into balance. Occasionally a person who is ill and cannot be cured by conventional methods will enter the Longhouse to ask for healing. In many of these situations such a person will give themselves to the Longhouse and in some cases remarkable cures have occurred.

The initiation rites that are conducted in the Longhouse are centuries old and the Longhouse Elder's have requested that they not be described in the written word.

The role of the non dancer is to support the participants and their families by gathering wood for the fires, singing and drumming for the dancers or helping to feed the guests who sometimes travel from long distances to take part in the ceremonies.

Given the rules and regulations that govern CSC the initiation of new dancers will probably never occur within an institutional setting. However, we do have offenders who are already members of the Longhouse and during the winter season you may see signs of change in this person as they reach a point where their "syewen" needs to be released through their spirit song.

Some signs that might be an indication of this need include outward signs of depression, a need to isolate themselves from others, sudden unexplained anger, lack of concentration and deep sounds of "sighing".

It is strongly recommended that this be brought to the attention of the Elder/Spiritual Advisor of the institution, they will see that the appropriate Longhouse people are advised of the situation and make arrangements to have them come into the institution to work with the offender.

CEDAR CLEANSING CEREMONY

The Cedar Cleansing ceremony is a very important part of the West Coast culture. It is the equivalent of the Smudging Ceremony mentioned above of the Prairie/Sweat Lodge teachings.

Cedar holds a traditional place in West Coast culture, having provided the people with housing, clothing, baskets, canoes, medicines and even cedar burial boxes. For these reasons it is held sacred and an important part of the ceremonies conducted among the West Coast people.

Cedar boughs are cut and prepared by the Elders for this ceremony. The boughs are used to "clean" the person off. This is accomplished by passing them over the body of the person with the appropriate traditional songs and prayers being led by the Elder.

In this manner the negative energy is taken off of the person and this helps to bring the person back into balance and harmony. After the ceremony the cedar boughs are put into the water to clean them and then are released back to nature to symbolically carry the negative energy away.

POTLATCH CEREMONY

The Potlatch is often referred to as the Give Away Ceremony. It is much more than that. It was the means by which the history and traditions of the North Coast Aboriginal people were passed down from generation to generation. It encompassed both their legal and political system.

Potlatches are held for a number of reasons, weddings, death, naming ceremonies, new crest, the raising of a totem pole or house pole, changing of property or territory, birth of a child, announcing a new chief and other important occasions. It is a time of story telling, great feasts and the drama of dance that tells the stories of the seen and unseen in this world and the spirit world.



WATER BATH CEREMONY

The water bath ceremony consists of having the person(s) enter into cold, running water. Facing east they must completely submerge themselves a number of times, then turning in each of the other three Sacred directions they again submerge several times, to complete the ceremony.

This can be completed under the direction of a West Coast Elder, done alone or in the company of others.

The purpose of this ceremony is to strengthen the spirit, clean off negativity and help the person regain balance and harmony within their life.

Sometimes, due to the circumstances of the person's incarceration, where there is no access to rivers, creeks, streams or waterfalls, water is placed in a large container or a hose may be used to do the ceremony,

BIG DRUM

The Big Drum is considered to be the heartbeat of the people. The Big Drum is brought out to celebrate certain ceremonies, to provide the music for the dancers at Pow Wows and to bring people together for both socialization and group prayers. The Elders tell us that every song that is sung at the Big Drum is a prayer.

One person is usually designated as the Big Drum Keeper. It is the responsibility of that person to ensure that no one approaches the drum that has been in contact with drugs or alcohol and that the Big Drum is always treated with respect.



POW WOW

The Pow Wow is a time of celebration for Aboriginal people. There are two types of Pow Wows. There is the traditional Pow Wow where everyone receives a small gift in appreciation for his or her participation. The main purpose is to offer up the songs and dances for all the people, using singing, dancing and drumming as a prayer. There is also the competition Pow Wows and they attract singers and dancers from all over North America and it is in fact a way of life for some people, who travel all over the world to participate and compete at these events during the Pow Wow season.

Each dance and regalia represents a different area of life. Some of these are the Traditional Dancer who represents one of the oldest forms of Plains Indian dance which involves straight posture, while dancers primarily move up and down in fluid motion to the beat of the drum. The Grass Dance is also a very old dance and is still used today; it evolved from the warrior society dances. The dancer moves in imitation of tall swaying prairie grass. Dreams or visions and healing are the bases for the Jingle Dress. Shawl or Fancy Dancers are usually young women. There are many different types of regalia, depending on where a person is from and what type of dance he or she has been called to do, through their visions or from an Elder instructing them.



SECTION ONE CLOSING COMMENTS:

Native Spirituality is founded on a belief in the fundamental inter-connection of all natural things, all forms of life, with primary importance being attached to the land, Mother Earth and to respecting each person's individual spiritual path.

There is no distinction between spiritual life and cultural life. Native spirituality is a total daily way of life, every day of your life. For Aboriginal people, sense of identity and sense of pride, are rooted in established spiritual traditions and principles.

Native Spirituality is founded in the belief of a Creator who imparts a life giving force during individual and group ceremonies. Ceremonies are the main vehicles of spiritual expression. An Elder/Spiritual Advisor assures the integrity of the ceremonies. There are no written teachings; they are passed on verbally by recognized spiritual people in the oral tradition of the people.

Individuals concentrate on the inner self, particularly in getting in touch with their inner feelings and learning to keep these in balance in order to live in harmony with all things upon Mother Earth.

The goals that are sought through Native Spirituality are enlightenment, strength, knowledge, respect, understanding, balance, harmony, peace of mind and sharing. Inner conflicts and fears are confronted, in ceremony, in an effort to develop emotional, mental, physical and spiritual healing.

Native spirituality is a very individualistic form of worship. It allows each individual to stand before the Creator, in their own way. Elders, Pipe Carriers, Healers and Spiritual Advisors are not there to tell a person how to pray or what is right and wrong for that individual. They are there to pass on the teachings and provide the ceremonies necessary for each person to reach the Creator in their own way and in their own time.

To pass judgement on another person or on that person's spiritual path is to pass judgement on yourself and on your own spiritual path. Although a true spiritual person may see that something is being done in a negative way, according to their

teachings, they will not judge that person. They may invite that person to a ceremony to help heal their spiritual self or they may pass on a teaching that they believe will lead the person to recognize the error of their way. These teachings often take the form of a story, with the ending pointing out the answer to the problem.

A saying you will often hear at ceremonies is "All My Relations". This closing remark perhaps explains Native Spirituality as no other words can. "All My Relations" is defined as meaning;

Through my Spirituality, by walking my path in a good and positive way, may I remain in perfect balance and harmony with every living thing that the Creator has put upon Mother Earth?



THE SEVEN SACRED TEACHINGS

RESPECT, LOVE, HONESTY, HUMILITY, COURAGE, TRUTH AND WISDOM

SECTION 2 – DEFINITIONS

One problem that has been encountered is the misunderstanding over titles in Aboriginal culture. Defining the titles of Elder, Spiritual Advisor, Teacher, Pipe Carrier and/or Healer and understanding their unique meaning can be confusing.

ELDER

What is an Elder and how can we evaluate what services an Elder can provide to the Aboriginal offender?

An Elder is a person who through their age and/or life experiences and proven spiritual walk, guides and teaches people on their spiritual journey through life. An Elder may be a man or a woman.

Great care should be taken as to who is eligible to carry this most respected title. Only an Aboriginal community can determine and acknowledge who is an Elder.

Not everyone, who has reached the age of 60 or over, are necessarily Elders. An Elder must be someone who by their example and their knowledge are able to teach us to live in balance and harmony with all around us. Most Elders have been through some type of great difficulties in their lives, this might have been a drug or alcohol problem, trouble with the legal system, relationship problems or illness. What makes this person an Elder will be the fact that they have learned and grown and changed the negative in their lives into positive words and actions. Through their words and actions they are able to pass on the knowledge they have earned to others in order to help them also learn and grow in their spiritual life.

An Elder does not incite anger or unbalance, nor does an Elders involve them self with things outside of the spiritual life. An Elder seeks always to guide people to the positive things in life and to help us understand how to reach our goals in a beneficial and sacred manner.

SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL ADVISOR

A Spiritual Advisor may be a man or a woman. A Spiritual Advisor is someone who has walked their path for a number of years and has a deep understanding and commitment to Native Spirituality.

They are familiar with all the ceremonies and the teachings behind these ceremonies. They bring with them teachings from their Elders and can be excellent role models and teachers. They are often involved in counselling the Aboriginal offender and can be a great asset to the Case Management team. Spiritual Advisors must also be acknowledged by their communities before assuming this title.

Because they may be younger people they are often better able to handle the stress and full agendas of working in a federal institution. They will also be able to contribute through meetings, oral and written reports, while at the same time being able to conduct ceremonies and do one to one counselling with the offenders.



HEALERS

Healers are called by many names, (Shaman, Indian Doctor, Medicine Man/Woman, etc.) depending on the type of healing they are gifted with and the geographical region they are from.

Some heal the spirit, some physical illnesses; some look beyond our everyday life into the future and back through the past to help us heal our self and become healthy people. Some heal through ceremonies and some with herbs.

A Healer may or may not be an Elder and/or a Pipe Carrier. A healer may be a man or a woman. Healers have been given special gifts from the Creator, the ability to look into another persons spirit and determine what is negative there and then offer a solution to help the person heal that negativity.

When a Healer has been asked to come into the institution, he/she may bring with them a Medicine Bundle. This bundle may never be touched by another person, x-rayed or handled in any way. If absolutely necessary, due to security concerns, this bundle may be searched in the manner outlined for searching a Sacred Bundle or Pipe Bundle.

Aboriginal people believe deeply in their Healers. In times of emergency or illness, they can contribute greatly to the spiritual and physical well being of the offender.

PIPE CARRIER

A Pipe Carrier may be a man or a woman. They may also be an Elder, Healer and/or Spiritual Advisor.

Pipe carriers have been given the sacred gift and responsibility of carrying the Sacred Pipe for the people. They conduct the ceremonies that call for the Sacred Pipe and must always follow a strong spiritual path, being clean of all negative aspects such as drug and alcohol.

HOW DOES A PERSON BECOME A PIPE CARRIER

The Elders tell us there are three acceptable ways that one may become a Pipe Carrier.

- **Hereditary**
- **Elder**

- **Vision**

Hereditary:

Even though many Sacred Ceremonies were outlawed for a period of time, some families were able to keep the ceremonies alive and continued to teach their children. These families passed the Sacred Pipe down from generation to generation in an unbroken line. Today there are still Pipe Carriers that have never lost the history or teachings of their families, and they are the Hereditary Pipe Carriers. Their right to carry the Sacred Pipe and perform the ceremonies is sanctioned by their bloodline.

Elder:

More commonly today an Elder, who is also a Pipe Carrier, will look into a persons spirit and find there the ability and dedication to carry a Sacred Pipe. The Elder, after spending time with the person, sharing the teachings and ceremonies, will then pass that person a Sacred Pipe. That Elder will then watch over the new Pipe Carrier to ensure that they are carrying the Pipe in a good and honorable manner. Only that Elder who passed the Pipe has the right to take the Pipe away. If that Elder passes away, then the Pipe Carrier should seek out a new Elder to guide and teach them.

There is some confusion about why offenders are not allowed to carry Pipes in the institution if an Elder in the community gave the Pipe to them. It was the decision of the National Elder's Working Group to the DGAI, that whatever situation occurred that brought the offender into the care of CSC, it also dissolved their right to carry a Sacred Pipe for the people. Upon their release from incarceration they can go back to the Elder who passed them the Sacred Pipe and follow their direction in regaining the right to become a Pipe Carrier.

Vision:

Sometime a person who is strong on their spiritual path will have a vision of the Sacred Pipe. They will be told, in the vision, that they are capable of carrying the Pipe and living up to the responsibilities of being a Pipe Carrier. It is then their responsibility to seek out an Elder and share this vision with them. If the Elder agrees that the vision is true, the Elder may agree to have the person come and apprentice with them (be a helper/oscapios) to learn the ways, teachings and ceremonies of the Pipe. This way often involves years of study with the Elder before a Pipe is actually passed to the person.

WHO MAKES THE PIPES

This is a subject that is often open to disagreement even among Aboriginal people. Traditionally only a person who has received the special gift of Pipe carving and has apprenticed to an Elder with that gift, is allowed to actually make a Sacred Pipe. Some teachings say that if a person is to become a Pipe Carrier they must carve their own Pipes. One area that all of the Elder's are in agreement on is, that Pipes should only be carved by people who are strong on their Spiritual Path and free of all negativity.

For this reason offenders are not allowed to carry a Sacred Pipe while incarcerated. If the offender comes into the system with a Pipe they have two alternatives to

follow. Send the Pipe out to the Elder they received it from or to another person of their choice. Have the Pipe put in their personal effects in A & D until their release.

PIPESTONE

The stone traditionally used to make Sacred Pipes comes from Pipestone Mountain in Minnesota. It is red, in different shades and hardness. Only a true Pipe Maker understands the nature and spirit of this stone and can see the Pipe within the stone before it is carved.

In order to protect this Sacred Stone no Pipestone is allowed in the institutions. If an offender comes into the system with Pipestone it is to be handled in the same manner that Pipes are handled above.

SWEAT LODGE CEREMONIES

From time to time the question arises should female Elders be allowed to participate or lead Sweat Lodge ceremonies in all male institutions and/or should male Elders participate or lead Sweat Lodge ceremonies in all female institutions.

In the Pacific Region it has been the decision that mixed Sweat Lodge ceremonies will not be allowed inside the institutions or within the community correctional half way house setting.

It must be kept in mind where these ceremonies are being conducted and who will be attending them. CSC must maintain secure and safe conditions wherever possible, both for the offenders and for the visitors.

This ruling differs from region to region and in the Pacific Region can only be changed by the Deputy Commissioner.

MEDICINE BAGS

These are the small bags that people wear around their necks. They are usually made of leather or cloth. The contents vary from person to person, but generally contain some form of herbs, (neither addictive nor illegal), stones or some item that may relate to the person's Spirit Keeper.

These Medicine Bags are held in great respect. They are both a protection against negative influences and a constant reminder of the Spiritual path the person has pledged to walk in their life.

It is extremely difficult to search these Medicine Bags as they are usually, but not always, sealed or sewed shut. If it becomes absolutely necessary for the safety of the institution, then the Elder should be the one to search the Medicine Bag in the presence of the offender.

SPIRIT KEEPERS

Spirit Keepers are those spiritual representatives of living animals, birds, plants, trees, natural elements such as wind, water, fire, etc., water related fish such as salmon, whales, etc. Every person comes onto Mother Earth with a Spirit Keeper, which guides and protects him or her. However, if a person is not walking a spiritual path they may not understand, accept or listen to the directions which a Spirit Keeper can give. Spirit Keepers can be compared to the Christian concept of a Guardian Angel.

OFFENDER'S PERSONAL SPIRITUAL EFFECTS

Many Aboriginal offenders have personal spiritual effects. These effects can bring great peace of mind and comfort to the holder.

Recently there has been some question as to how these effects should be wrapped or identified. There is no way to cover all of the ways they can be put together.

Each set of spiritual effects is unique to the holder and is made up of items that have meaning and are sacred to the individual.

For reasons of security, the offender's personal spiritual effects entering the institution should be checked by the Elder and the A&D officer to ensure the integrity of the spiritual effects. A list of the articles it contains should be listed on a form and copies of the form should be given to A&D, the Elder and a copy should stay with the spiritual effects. (See sample form in appendix.)

At the present time personal spiritual effects are wrapped in cloth, leather, a blanket or contained in a box. Items that are most commonly found in a Sacred Bundle are:

- Smudge Bowl
- Smudges (Herbs)
- Stones (Small)
- Sweet Grass
- Wood Matches
- Feathers (Eagle, hawk, owl)
- Feather Box
- Tobacco Ties
- Flags (Cloth)
- Ribbon Shirt/Dress
- Rattle
- Hand Drum

Jewelry and items of monetary value are discouraged. If there is doubt about the contents of the offender's personal spiritual effects have the Elder come and review its contents.

NOTE:

The Regional Elders Advisory Council has determined that Offender's Personal Spiritual Effects have no monetary value. Their value lies in the Spiritual Sacredness of the effects to the holder. Each person who carries spiritual effects are responsible for their care.

HAIR (CUT)

It is traditional to cut ones hair upon the death of a loved one. This hair is sometimes kept for a period of time until it can be properly put away. Sometimes when a person has offended in a manner that goes against their own teachings, an Elder will advise them to cut their hair as a means of showing their sorrow for the transgression.

Within the institutional environment cut hair should be disposed of in ceremony as soon as possible under the direction of the Elder.

INDIAN

A term that describes all of the Aboriginal people in Canada who are not Inuit or Metis. In addition there are three legal definitions that apply to Indians in Canada: Status Indians, Non-Status Indians and Treaty Indians.

This term is considered to be offences to most First Nation people in Canada. However, the term is still used in government documents such as the Indian Act.

FIRST NATIONS

A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word Indian which many people found offensive. Although the term First Nations is widely used no legal definition of it exists. Among its usage the term "First Nations Peoples" refers to both Status and Non-Status Aboriginal people.

INUIT

For many centuries, outsiders called Inuit "Eskimos." Inuit no longer find this term acceptable. They prefer the name by which they have always known themselves – Inuit, which means "the people" in their own language, Inuktitut.

Inuit inhabit vast areas of Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, the coast of northern Labrador and about 25 percent of Northern Quebec. Traditionally, they have lived above the tree line in the area bordered by Alaska in the west, the Labrador coast in the east, the southern tip of Hudson Bay in the south and the High Arctic Islands in the north.

About 55,700 Inuit live in 53 communities across the North. The Inuit population has grown rapidly over the past few decades. According to Statistics Canada, if present trends continue, there will be about 84,600 Inuit in the North by 2016.

METIS

The definition of Metis reads, "Metis means a person who self identifies as Metis, is of historic Metis Nation ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples and is accepted by the Metis Nation." More commonly known as a person of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry.

If there are any concerns that have not been addressed in this guide you may contact the Regional Elder

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Aboriginal Awareness training is available to each institution or group upon request.

SECTION 3 – MEDICINE WHEEL TEACHINGS

The Medicine Wheel represents our cycle of life from conception to our return to the Spirit World. It is a guide to learning, a mentor to help us in our prayers, a counsellor to help us in understand our self and the world around us and a constant reminder of our duties and responsibilities as spiritual people walking our path upon Mother Earth.

It is a way of learning who we are and how we can relate in a positive way to every living thing upon Mother Earth.

The Circle has always been an important part of everyday life for Aboriginal people. Our camps (communities) were built in a circle. Many of our homes reflected the circle concept such as the tepee and hogans. Our ceremonies are conducted in a circle. The Sweat Lodges, Sacred Circle ceremonies, Pipe ceremonies and Sundance are all conducted in a circle. We dance in a circle at Pow Wows and around the Sun Dance Pole. We dance in a circle in the Longhouse and at Potlatch ceremonies. Our Big Drums represent the circle. When we set in Council we form a circle, so that everyone is equal, with an equal voice. Elders teaching will draw the young people around them in a circle.

We see life as a circle from birth, to death, to spiritual rebirth. We understand that we, like the seasons, pass through several phases as the circle of life and time pass around us.

To fall out of this circle is to fall out of harmony with life and to cease to grow and learn as the Creator meant for us to do.

It is for these reasons that the Medicine Wheel teachings can be used as a positive tool for helping our brothers and sisters, who find themselves in conflict with the legal system, to find their way back into the spiritual circle of life.

We enter the circle at birth, and through our journey around the circle, we grow and learn. To stay at any one point on the circle of life is to become static. To become static is to stop growing and if we cannot grow we stop the life force of our being.

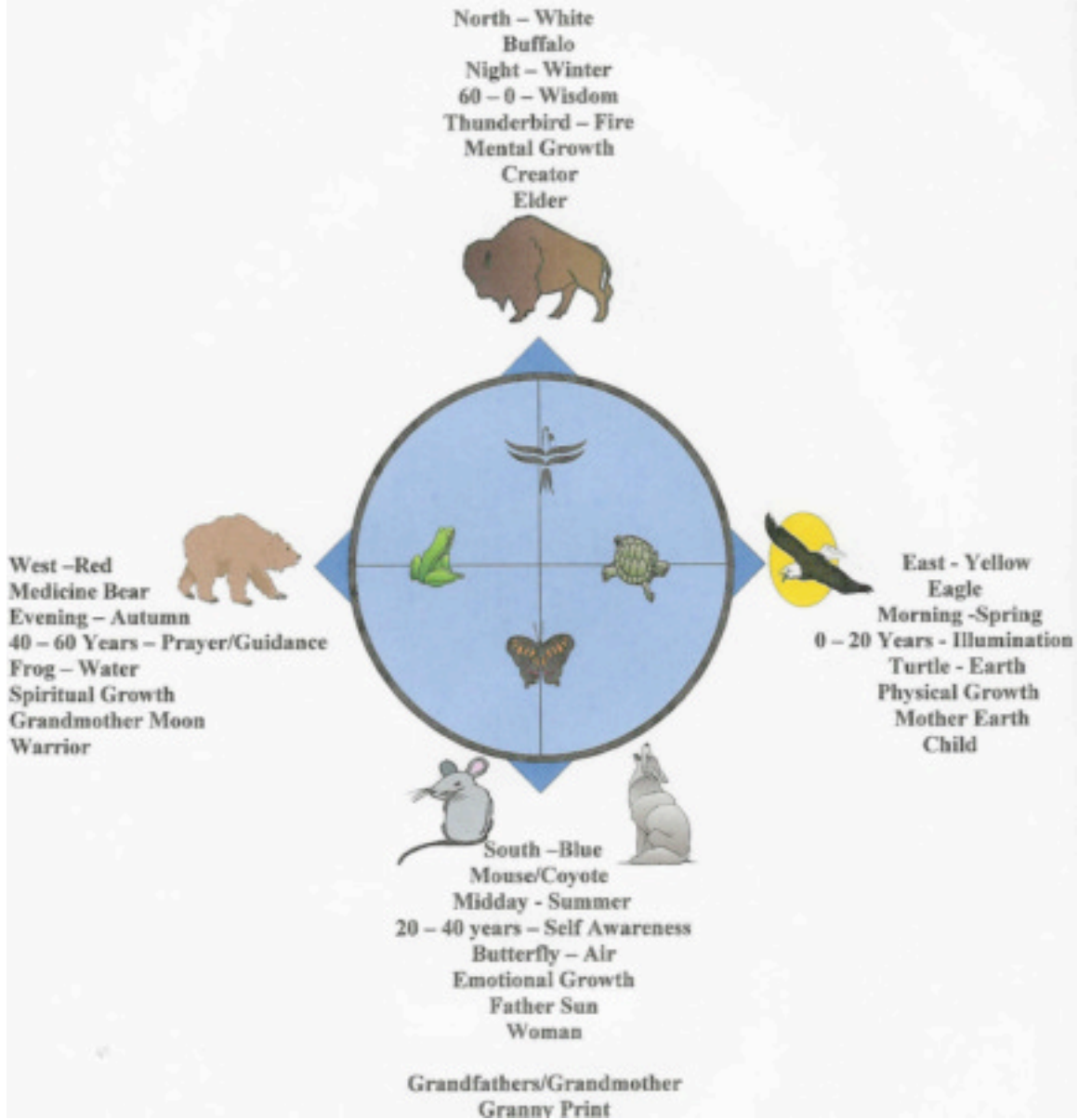
The center of the Medicine Wheel is movement and change. For those who remain in balance and harmony with all living things, Mother Earth becomes a wonderful place,

full of beauty, peace of mind, sharing, contentment, learning and spiritual growth. If we become out of balance, stray away from the teachings, we become alone, afraid and feel unloved, unworthy and rejected. This leads to depression, anger and acts of violence against our self and others.

There are many forms of the Medicine Wheel teachings and all should be both studied and respected. The following is the Traditional Cree Medicine Wheel teachings.



MEDICINE WHEEL



Medicine Wheel teachings interpreted by: Sharron Whitewolf John

Medicine Wheel design by: Jane Whiting

EASTERN DOORWAY

We begin our journey on the Medicine Wheel when we wake up each the morning. We smudge and try to learn from the eastern doorway as we begin a new day.

The east represents the beginning. The start of a new day, which brings new hope. As the sun rises on this new day all things are possible, it promises fresh starts.

The print that represents this direction is yellow and represents the rising sun. The Spirit Keeper for this direction is the Eagle. Because of its ability to fly so high the ancestors considered the Eagle to be closest to the Creator. Its ability to reach such great heights led them to believe it could see everything at once and therefore should represent understanding. The ability for us to understand people and actions outside of our control, but which impact on our life.



The east also represents spring and the rebirth of Mother Earth. It is the time we pray for Mother Earth, for her healing so that she can support our life upon her.

It is the Turtle, which represents Mother Earth, and for this reason Mother Earth is also sometimes referred to as Turtle Island. The Turtle is strong and if left in its natural environment, long lived. But if you turn the Turtle on its back, it becomes weak and will die. Mother Earth is also long lived and strong enough to support all living things upon her, if left alone in her natural environment, but if misused she will become weak and unable to sustain life.

It is at this early morning time that we pray for all the children and youth in our lives. This represents the physical part of our growth and the wonder of childhood.

Childhood is that time when everything is new and fresh, children can spend hours looking at a flower, staring at the stars, totally caught up in the moment. They are closest to the Creator, having just come from the Spirit World. They see things clearly, the wounds of life or the hardships ahead do not blind them, they have no notion of the limitations of time and the concept of death is an unknown.

To the young each moment, the now, is the important thing. They are still in awe of all they see and learn. They are trusting, loving and full of questions. That is why it is so important to protect, encourage and support this child. Later in our life, when

we are adults, this has become known as the "inner child" and it can be a positive influence to the adult us. Enabling us to still have the ability to learn and grow, to remain thankful for the beauty around us and to reach out to others for help and support. However if mistreated or abused, it is still the inner child in the adult, but now becomes negative and destructive.

In the Medicine Wheel teachings we take this time to examine the child within us. Looking at our past, our childhood, relationships at that time, how these things contributed to who we are today. We work at healing the child (our past) so it can become a positive influence on our life today. We look into the future at our relationships with the children who will enter our life and what we can contribute to their positive growth.

SOUTHERN DOORWAY

When the sun is high in the noon day sky, we are full into our day. We turn to the south on our journey on the Medicine Wheel. The Spirit Keepers for this direction are the little brother Mouse and the Coyote. It is in this direction that we also honor the Grandfathers and Grandmothers who have gone before us. Blue represents the noonday sky.

Little brother Mouse is so close to the ground that he can only see within his own small world. So it is with us. It is for this reason that we associate self-awareness, seeking to understand our own behavior and feelings, with the little brother mouse.

We seek to walk in our own truth by recognizing our weaknesses and our strengths. What pushes our buttons and why? How can we become healthy in all areas of our life and live in a good and positive way?



The Coyote, the Trickster, teaches us through experiences outside of our self, but which cause us to react in different ways. The Elders tell us to remember a time when something looked really good and we wanted it with out whole being and would do anything to have it. Only to have our wish fulfilled and to learn that the thing we wanted, desired the most, was also the thing that caused the most hurt and pain, to ourselves and to others.

It is in this way that Coyote teaches us to be careful when we look at a person, situation or activity, to examine all sides before making decisions or committing ourselves. To truly know our self in order to truly know what will compliment us and help us become stronger and better people.

The south also represents midday, a time to look at our morning as we have spent it. To remove any negativity we have accumulated during the morning and deal with any issues we have faced. To commit our afternoon and evening to only positive things.

Midday is the time we concentrate on summer. It is a time of growing and fulfillment, coming to adulthood from our childhood years. This is the time of our emotional growth. We are now praying for those young adults in our lives. It is the time we start forming and following our own standards, goals, values and beliefs.

We develop adult relationships, fall in love, decide on and start our future careers. At this time we have begun to experience some of the hardships of life, we are learning and growing, becoming the full person we will eventually become. We are busy with our life, our families and our careers. Our lives are full and we often do not consider what is beyond this period of time. Now is the important thing, this moment, doing and accomplishing, achieving and forming our future.

Emotionally this is one of the hardest times, falling in love, determining our own inner worth, watching our children come into the world and begin their journey away from our protection. Facing the disappointments of life, determining our weaknesses and strengths and learning to adjust to this knowledge.

The Butterfly represents this emotional growth as it flutters first here, then there, always in motion, always seeking.

Father Sun represents the height of our physical self. The strong rays of our life force.

It is the female aspect of us that resides here. Giving us the ability to love, to share and to care. Being compassionate to others, healing our own wounds and the hurts of those we love and those who reach out to us in need. Gathering all into the comfort of her being.

We all need the strong female within us. It is this part of us that allows us to nurture our families, be compassionate in our relationships with others. Caring about the world around us, giving and receiving with gentleness and kindness. The female within gives us our artistic talents. It helps us to express our deepest emotional self. It is important to keep the female within us in balance. When this side of us becomes weak it leads to lack of feeling and compassion. In weakness we give in to negativity and turn away from our path in hopelessness and helplessness.

We also honor the Grandfathers and Grandmothers in this direction. They are the teachers, the givers of their wisdom and life experiences for those who would listen and learn.

As we walk in the path of those who have gone before us, we begin to understand what they have gone through and start to learn from our own life experiences.

In the Medicine Wheel teachings we turn to the south to examine the female part within us. We look at all the female relationships in our life, what positive and negative effects they have had on our life. We look at our ability or lack of ability to form lasting and positive relationships and what we can do in the future to correct our weaknesses and bring strength to this area of our life

WESTERN DOORWAY

In the evening we turn to the west and find the Medicine Bear, keeper of our spiritual life. The old ones say it is the bear that taught us how to find the medicines to heal our self. Red represents the setting sun. Our workday is over and at this time of our lives our struggles have been identified. We have reached a point of change in our life. We pray for those older, mature adults in our lives.

We have been busy growing physically, fighting for our careers, raising our families, and establishing lasting relationships. We are what we have made ourselves at this point in our lives. There is still time for growth, learning and wisdom, but we are also aware that time is running out and often we find that there is an emptiness that we are unable to identify. A longing for something more. An awareness that our time upon Mother Earth is now limited.

We look towards our spirituality in new, clearer terms, in a deeper understanding that we will soon be facing the Creator. It is a time to look closely at our life, a last chance if you will, to correct our weaknesses. Through our spirituality we review our past, the present and our future. It is autumn and Mother Earth is preparing for the winter to come. The hardest labor is behind us, there is now time to consider the future, our future, our future as spiritual people. We have finished our physical growth, reached the peak of our mental growth and now can examine our life with intelligence and vision. Where are we going from here?

The frog represents the water and the water is the healing and cleansing agent. Allowing us to clean away the negative from our life and concentrate fully on preparing our self for the time to come. Grandmother Moon is high in the night sky, reminding us that our day is almost finished, as is our time on Mother Earth. Time to start closing the circle of our life.



In the west stands the male, the warrior within us. The one who, when we are walking our life path in a good and positive way, stands up for the truths we believe in, protects those we love and care for and gives us the strength to pass through the bad times. When we walk our path in a negative manner, the warrior within us

becomes out of balance, violence against ones self and others is the outcome of being out of balance on your spiritual path.

For this reason we need to look closely at the male, the warrior within us. When we allow him to walk a negative path many people suffer, we look at all the male relationships in our past; identify the negative and positive values of these relationships. We look at our own life and identify where the warrior has failed and where he has succeeded. We find positive ways to keep the warrior strong and to use this strength for constructive purposes.

NORTHERN DOOR

Just before we go to sleep at night we face the Northern Door. White represents the north and the winter snows. The Buffalo, who were the givers of food, shelter, medicine and all good things, is the Spirit Keeper for this direction. The north is the last point of our daily journey. We are now in the winter of our life, just as Mother Earth has covered herself with snow to rest and restore her for the coming of new life; we also prepare our self for rest from this world and the coming of a new life.

We have walked through the storms of life. If we have learned and followed the teachings and are in balance and harmony with all living things, then we have walked through the fire and joined our spirits with the old ones in preparation for our journey home.



If we have learned by our life experiences and the teachings of our Elders, we are now entering a time of true wisdom, which we in turn will share with others.

Now is the time we look back over our life to truly see and understand the legacy we have left behind. Are we proud of what we have accomplished or do we live in shame and dissatisfaction? Has our testing, while we walked through the fire of life, left us an inner child who still remains in awe of all the Creator has provided? Does the female/woman within remain caring and strong? Is the male/warrior satisfied that he has done all that was required of him? It is in the true answers to these questions that we can define our legacy.

In wisdom we accept we have not always been perfect. We have hurt others and our self along the way. We have not always done our best with the gifts the Creator has

so generously given us. However, if we can truly say we have done our best at each point on the Medicine Wheel, both daily and throughout our lives, then our legacy will live on in a good and positive way.

Before we go to sleep we ask the Creator to help us learn from the mistakes of this day and to guide and protect us in the coming day.

NOTE:

There are many different interpretations of the Medicine Wheel teachings. Each of them is to be respected and each of them are there to teach us and help us live in balance and harmony.

All My Relations

**Sharron Whitewolf John
Regional Elder – Pacific Region
December, 2003**



Inuit Spirituality of North Coast Labrador

Compiled by Sarah Anala, CM, GN, Inuit Liaison/Elder

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Inuit Spirituality is a profound way of life and of being, as a traditional INUMMARIk, a true Inuk. (singular of Inuit). It is a high honour to be regarded by one's fellow-Inuit, INUKATET, as one who has become ISUMMATUk, one with traditional Elder knowledge and wisdom in all the Inuit ways. ISUMA being mind, knowledge and right common sense in the customs and way of life of the Inuit. When one is deemed to have good ISUMA, one's way of thought, decision, action, behaviour and carriage of oneself are much admired and treated with much respect and reverence. One of the philosophies is ILIRA from which stems ILIGANATTUk. The Labrador Inuk, the effective and trusted Leader, the Healer were treated as ILIGANATTUIT in whose presence one felt awe, respect and humility, in whose presence one remained silent and still until to whom spoken or by whom instructed. Silence is known as a very effective element of healing.

A person with the following gifts is held in very high esteem, MANIGUNNIk, humbleness; KINUITSANIk, patience; NALAGUNIk, honesty; TUNGAVINIKANNIk, trust-worthy; ISUMAKKUTUNNIk, wisdom; INUMMARINIk, traditional/cultural/spiritual and customary knowledge; ISUMAGIJUNNAINIKANIk, forgiveness.

Another philosophy utilized in Inuit Spirituality is AJUNNAMAT, it is a way of accepting the positive and negative as happening or occurring as it is MEANT to happen exactly that way and at that time. As, it, too, will KANGIk, come to pass. Inuit live just one day at a time, the happenings and occurrences falling as exactly as they were meant to fall on that given day. It brings balance and a sense of peace to one's life. AJUNNAMAT, it is beyond one's control and it is in the control of a Being far greater than a mere human. Even death and tragedy are accepted as AJUNNAMAT.

When one lives and walks Inuit Spirituality, one is seen and deemed to be whole in body, mind, spirit, emotions and behaviour. He/she is recognized as not UIMAJAK, unstill in spirit, thus, calm and deep in all manner of life. All one's "gifts" in body, mind, spirit, emotions and behaviour are in synchrony and remain unwavering in times of great hardship and testing. If one does not think and behave as such, loss of life may occur in a blizzard or storm due to a minute detail of a wrong decision, unbalanced.

Inuit Spirituality is based on the principle "what is good at this time in this situation for the common good of all". It is an unselfish way of life. True Inuit Leaders, not only think but, act this way, yet, to this day (2002). Inuit not only TALK about what will remain for the grand children, they LIVE that way of life. Inuit Spirituality bears the understanding and action that birds must not be killed when carrying young, seals must not be killed when carrying young, the nest downs must be collected only after the chicks have grown. This kind of teaching is not taught in a classroom, it is knowledge inherent to the Inuit.

Inuit Spirituality is a two-way Path, it is an unfathomable love and respect for the Creator, the created, and the CREATURES of which this unconditional love and respect by all three is given back to the Inuk. It is being in absolute and immeasurable

balance with the land, of the land, on the land and for the land. For without what the land (earth) holds within it, the Inuk is nothing, the Inuk cannot live. This special attachment cannot be totally understood by non-Inuit. This realization and recognition of the land culminates in daily gratitude for all living and breathing life, the human being, the animals, the fish, the plants, the mammals, the birds and all others that are nourished and nurtured by the land. Therefore, for all living and breathing life one must give thanks and take care of it. It is not a lesson taught, it is a way of life. Even those viewed by the Euro-western world as inanimate such as the mountains, the fiords, the seas, the snows are regarded as sacred, reverent and awesome by Inuit as; they hold the footprints of our ancestors and sustain all life form. In Inuit Spirituality, mankind is not superior to the land and the land seen as something to be conquered by man. It is oneness with the land like the umbilical cord to the mother's womb. It not only gives life but that life is shared between the two.

Inuit Spirituality is based on egalitarianism, Inuit Spirituality has primarily been land-based rather than economy based. Although today (2002), even in the North, money plays a large part in the community economy. In the recent past and, even with many today, there is much sharing of the kill. In particular is the first hunt for a young man most significant, one has become an Inuk man. The first hunt of an Inuk youth is held sacred to this day; it is a right-of-passage occasion. It is a time of spiritual and cultural ceremony and festivity with much feasting. The choice pieces and organs are brought, firstly to one's ANNAKUTIK, the Inuk mid-wife who had brought one into this world to whom the hunter is the ANGUSIAK. This relationship is honored all throughout one's life; gifts are exchanged in every special Inuit occasion. The first fish one catches, the first berries which one picks, the first partridge hunted are always unselfishly brought to her. Then, the other choice pieces are brought to the Elders, to one's ATITSIK (namesake), one's INNIK (son) after whose father the hunter has been named. There are many other sacred relationships, with no immediate blood relation, in the community due to the Inuit naming system. Here, they are too numerous to all include.

The Inuit naming system is still practiced by some, still, to this day, despite the influx of fancy names from television and Euro-western reading material. In this system, one can have a stronger tie to the person than to one's immediate family. There is also an inherent life responsibility, which accompanies the naming system. It is believed that when a respected family member has passed on that the spirit of that person has returned in the next newborn in the immediate, extended or traditional/customary relationships in the community.

Before nurses and doctors arrived in the North, Inuit midwives and their assistants could correctly foretell the gifts one will carry throughout life. For example, she will be gifted with patience; he/she will become a wise Elder/Leader or Healer. This knowledge was accepted with much seriousness. In the Inuit naming system, there are sacred relationships which are nurtured and held in high esteem all throughout one's life and thereafter. When an infant is named after a particular, respected community or clan member, it is treated with the same respect and honor as was bestowed upon the original person. The parents and the teachings-keepers look for and nurture those gifts from infancy onward. From this stems the way of non-interference misinterpreted by the Euro-westerns as "lack of discipline". In the meantime, the child is being pruned and groomed for deep and meaningful responsibilities. The INUATSUK, the INUATSUALUK, the KUMITTIALUK, the KUMITTIAGULAK, the ATTITSIK, the TIGUMIAK (all spiritual relationships) take on the responsibility of one's spiritual, cultural, traditional, customary, attitudinal,

ideological up-bringing, along with the parents. If the newborn was predicted to become a wise Elder, one with great ISUMA (mind), one with great KINUITSANIK, great patience, in all facets of life, then, one was and is pruned and groomed for that Life Path. Even the predictions for, such negative characteristics as, impatience or quick with words were and are accepted with great pride and respect as having a positive role in the hunter/gatherer way of life. It is their PIUSIK, their ILUSIK, their own character, their own personal way of being in this world. Perhaps, that impatience would get one to the hunting camp before a life-threatening storm came on. Everything, positive or negative, is accepted as having a role in the Inuit ways.

Inuit children, due to the Naming System, reincarnation beliefs, embodiment of ancestors and their own uniqueness, preciousness and specialness are regarded sacred in who much respect and honor is placed. Inuit have been said to have the most willingness to do for and sacrifice more for their children than any other race in the world. This is done with no sense of burden, sacrifice or being put out. It has been known that an Inuk mother and father will go without eating for days so that the children will have in times of scarcity. After all, they are the ones who will ensure the presence of Inuit life upon this earth.

Much, of the Inuit Spirituality on the North Coast Labrador, has been respected by the Moravian Missionaries who arrived in the 1700 and 1800's. Both have lived side by side in a good way for 250 years (2002). It IS possible to live with both in one's life as evidenced by the Spirituality which guides the Labrador Inuit of today. Writer's brother who is a published author, church instrument player, bass/tenor singer, retired heavy equipment operator, hunter/gatherer still prays to the spirit of the animal for which he is going hunting, thanks the spirit of that animal for giving up its life to feed him, the less fortunate and the Elders in the community. There are still some who remember, to this day, to give the hunted seal a drink for; it came from the ocean (water) so that the hunter may have life. When one's Inuit drum is made from sealskin, one blesses it with salt, ocean water as that had been its home.

Eating together for Inuit is not just a matter of poking food into one's mouth or stomach. It is a spiritual experience; it is acknowledging the hunt, the kill, the survival of the ancestors through the children who are feasting with them and a celebration of life form and life force. It is giving thanks for being ILAGET, families together. It carries with it a great sense of gratitude, sustenance and survival together. Togetherness is regarded in very high esteem. There is great attention placed on family lineage, honor and ability.

In Inuit Spirituality, everything happens, good or bad, WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT. In the Inuit world, one's life is not guided by the clock but by the weather which is an acceptance of nature as it is meant to occur for the well being of the earth and humankind. "Depends on the weather" means much more than a meteorological or climactic observation. It is recognizing and accepting the behaviour and ways of the earth, the land, to sustain it and all that within it lies. Inuit don't fret over snow, rain, sleet and other inclement weather as, the Euro-westerns do. Inuit are even grateful for it as, it provides an "unexpected" day of rest from the hunter/gatherer way of life. It is in a blizzard that Inuit children can be heard so free-spirited, their laughter and gaiety bouncing off the mountains in the wind. It is another aspect of accepting the things one cannot change for the moment in the larger scheme of life.

In Inuit Spirituality, the human body can be accurately used as a natural barometer, forecasting changes in the weather or indicator of things that will occur. This is

ALWAYS correct. The body is in synchrony with the tides, the moon, the sun, the stars, the northern lights. These can be also used in prediction of how a certain person will behave in the coming days.

Emotional instability was viewed as having a negative impact as; stable emotions were and are required in the total well-being of the group. Time cannot be wasted in instability in a way of life guided by the elements.

Inuit with such conditions as, Down's Syndrome or ISUMAKATSIANGITUIT (learning disabled or mentally challenged) were viewed as gifted in the shamanistic way before the arrival of Christianity. That belief is still held by some as the lack of one gift can be compensated by a very much stronger gift. For instance, having inherent knowledge of the old ways, predicting things yet to come, predicting profound messages, therefore, fore warning the community.

Because Inuit Spirituality is so land-based and sea-based, the spiritual Inuk must know every aspect of each season, what to harvest at what part of each season before the gathered food become poisonous. The Inuk must know what materials to use in each season; for instance the TUPIK, the tent in the spring and summer, the sod-house or KAMMAK in the fall and the ILLUVIGAK, the snow-house in winter while hunting and gathering. All the elements must be treated with respect and knowledge for, as well as providing life, they can take it away if not treated with the highest of respect.

With responsibility of the chosen teachers, that, too, is a two-way journey. When the teachers become too old and feeble, one does for them as they had done during one's rearing. When they can no longer hunt, it is the young who now hunt for them, understanding the snows, the ice, the seas, the winds as one was taught. Then, the Elder shows great pride, joy and gratitude in the person as having learned well. The culture and the traditions live on.

In older times, the ancestors who had passed on were buried above-ground with huge stones. Inside were their tools, instruments and hunting/gathering utensils to facilitate a good hunting journey in the Spirit World as Inuit believe that they have two souls.

In the Spirit, of the Inuit, there are the AKITIGIJET, healers of the body; ULAPITSAIJET, Healers of the mind and spirit; ANIASIUTET, Healers with plants, spruce trees, animal grease and other traditional medicines; ANGAKKUNGAJUIT, shaman-like, able to foster peace through spirit and mind travel; SILANNIATET, forecasters of the weather; PIULITSIJET, traditional Inuit first-aid givers; SILATUJUIT KAUMANNILET, wisdom and knowledge holders; ANGAJUKKAUKATIGET, Leaders in a Good Way; ILINNIATITSIJET, the teachers; INUTUKAIT, the Elders; PIULIMAKTET PIUSIKTINIK, Keepers of our Ways; kiGGAIT, Moravian Chapel Servants. There are many other words conveying the same gifts but may have variations from different regions and different land bases within the regions. There are many other Inuktitut words for different purposes of people. Each region may have their own teachings, depending on the specific land-base in which the Inuit live.

Common simple things like the air, the water, the fire and the Earth are still elements in and of Inuit healing.

So, it can be easily seen that INUIT SPIRITUALITY encompasses and encircles every aspect of the Inuk. This is only a smidgen of what an old, on-the-land, unilingual and unicultural Inuk Elder and Teacher would be able to tell.

It is no wonder, then, that the Inuit are known as "A People who has refused to die".

Finally, an Inuk living in the above ways is referred to, with much admiration and respect, as one with "free Spirit", acknowledging one's strong spirit and mind, by one's fellow-Inuit; worthy of being to whom referred as an INUMMARIK.

It is an honor to share that KUMITTIALUK referred to writer, all her life, until his passing (2000) as "one who had learned well".

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Mrs. Zipora Hunter, cousin, Inuktitut Choir Melody Leader/Linguist/Educator/Acolyte, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, originally from Hopedale, Labrador.CONTRIBUTION: Correct terminology for: Healers with Plants, Spruce Trees, Animal Grease and other traditional medicines; Traditional Inuit First-aid Givers; Fore-casters of weather; Keepers of our Ways; and verification of Healers of the Body; Healers of the Mind and Spirit; Shaman-like, able to foster peace through Spirit and Mind Travel; Wisdom and Knowledge Keepers; Leaders in a Good Way; the Teachers; and the Elders.Johannes Lampe, translator, Labrador Inuit Health Commission, Moravian Chapel Servant, Nain, Labrador.CONTRIBUTION: Correct terminology for "forgiveness". Sarah Ponniuk, Elder/Healer/Mental Health Therapist, Nain, Labrador. CONTRIBUTION: Consultation for accuracy of whole document. Enoch Obed, Elder/Healer/Land-based Healing, Sheshashit, North West River, Labrador. CONTRIBUTION: Consultation for accuracy of whole document. Acknowledgement is also given to my late father, Nikulaus Anala and late mother, Judy Anala; Kumittialuk, the late Paulus Maggo, Kumittiagulak, the late Naime Maggo; Inuatsuk, the late Aiggie Harris, Malasik, the late Martin Martin, Chief Elder for Nain, Labrador.Nakumek, thank you. Respectfully, Sarah Anala April 17, 2002



Primer on Aboriginal Issues

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There are a number of unique assessment and treatment issues that are important to consider with Aboriginal offenders. Perhaps the best way to initiate this discussion is to phase these issues in the form of questions, each of which needs to be dealt with in turn.

Do we understand the concepts of Aboriginal spirituality/culture? Is our understanding based on solid foundations of training with qualified Aboriginal facilitators/Elders or on bits and pieces of information garnered from different sources? Are we able to respect the teachings and uniqueness of Aboriginal offenders to appropriately provide valid assessment and treatment services for these individuals?

In providing assessments of Aboriginal offenders do we understand the historical facts that are prevalent in a majority of Aboriginal offenders? Do we understand the significance of Residential School? Do we know that the residential school syndrome is not ancient history, but a current influence in many Aboriginal offenders' lives? Do we understand the consequences of foster care, adoption by non-Aboriginal families, group homes and the total breakdown of family units?

Are we aware that Aboriginal people have different learning styles, being accustomed to visual and oral learning, rather than written information or calibrated testing.

Do we understand the difference between being raised traditionally, being raised on an Indian Reserve and being raised in an urban setting? Do we understand the impact that these different backgrounds have on the Aboriginal individual?

Do we appreciate the many different cultural and spiritual differences there are among Aboriginal people? For example do we know that within British Columbia there are at least four different spiritual groups of Aboriginal people? (Longhouse, Potlatch, Christianity and Prairie/ Sweat Lodge.) Do we understand that even among the Prairie people (Sweat Lodge people) there are notable differences in teachings and ceremonies and that these teachings impact on how Aboriginal offenders approach different aspects of their lives and how they relate to others?

Healing is a journey – not a destination

The first thing that should be understood about the Aboriginal concept of healing is that it is a life time journey.

Since European contact Aboriginal people have been in a constant state of trying to survive in what has been mostly an unfriendly and basically foreign environment. Trying to survive without understanding the dominate societies rules of survival, without understanding the European language of survival and all the while watching our own environment, language, spirituality, family connections and belief system flow away like water into a river. Even those who tried to hold on to all the

fundamental things that made up the Aboriginal society, like the traditional Elders and Healers, found their way of life slipping away.

This was not an isolated occurrence that happened to one tribe or band of people, but a universal destruction of all that Aboriginal people believed in.

Aboriginal people celebrated a richness of diversity in everything from spiritual practices, languages, styles of government, dress, foods, customs and other practices, from the East Coast to the West Coast and from the southern most border – to the northern most border of what is now called Canada.

In spite of these differences they were uniform in their belief in a higher being (The Creator), their respect for Mother Earth as provider and life giver and their reverence for all things that the Creator provided. They celebrated the gift of life, honoured the Creator through their different ceremonies, cherished their children and families, respected their Elders and in all things sought to walk in balance and harmony with all living things upon Mother Earth.

All of this was expressed through their languages and ceremonies. The Sacred Teachings on how to walk their path in life in a good and honourable way were passed on from the Elders to the children, by way of stories and role modelling. Aboriginal spirituality/culture was and is maintained through oral history. The Aboriginal way of learning has always been through oral teachings, visual reminders, life experiences and repetition.

With the coming of Europeans many changes started to occur within the different tribes that they came into contact with.

Most Aboriginal communities were structured under a matriarchal system, with European contact this began to change towards a patriarchal society. Thus interrupting thousands of years of societal concepts which caused confusion and disruption of proven ways of handling concerns and issues that arose within the community. Without understanding the patriarchal system of life and how it worked in European society, the Aboriginal communities began to fall apart.

As more Europeans came to Canada seeking new beginnings for themselves and their families, Aboriginal people became a hindrance to their dominance over the land they were trying to conquer. The owning of Mother Earth was a completely foreign concept to Aboriginal people, who understood that Mother Earth could not be owned by an individual, but only used with respect to meet the needs of the people. Eventually Aboriginal people were moved onto reserves. This took away the only way of life they had ever known, leaving them again in a foreign environment without knowing how to survive. Over the centuries, Aboriginal people had acquired knowledge, invented technology and developed a way of life adapted to their specific environment. They had depended on nature for their survival and had a special relationship with it. For them, the Earth was and still is sacred, something to be respected.

As their way of life was taken away, no longer able to hunt and fish freely as they roamed the land, so was the self-respect of their men taken away. All the rules of Aboriginal society that defined who a man was and where his place was within his tribe disappeared. This feeling of displacement, of uselessness, of being less than they were meant to be eventually led to alcoholism and the inevitable breakdown of

family units. The women, no longer having a voice in the decision making process, due to the change to a patriarchal society, were lost and also without a voice.

It was at this point that the Residential School system was put in place. It was thought that by bringing in the children to "civilize them" that eventually the "Indian Problem" would go away. This came to be the absolutely most devastating time in Aboriginal history. What little remained of the Aboriginal way of life was almost totally destroyed during this period.

Residential Schools began in 1874 and the last federally ran school closed in 1996. It is estimated that there are over 90,600 people alive today who were forced to attend Residential Schools.

It is believed that the numbers are actually much higher, as many records were lost or destroyed; many residential school students have passed away or have been lost in the system.

Some notable quotes from the people in authority during the period of the Residential Schools will emphasize what they were suppose to accomplish by taking the children away from their families, homes and communities.

1884 – John A. Macdonald, Prime Minister of Canada in the House of Commons said, "I think we must by slow degrees, education generation after generation, until the nature of the animal almost is changed by the nature of "the surroundings".

In keeping with this line of thought in 1884/85 all Aboriginal ceremonies, such as the Potlatch, Longhouse, Sundance and Sweat Lodges were forbidden by law, fully enforceable and punished by fines or prison. This effectively eliminated the last cultural hold that Aboriginal people had on their old way of life. This law was finally rescinded in 1951.

1895 – Superintendent of Indian Affairs – "So long as he keeps his Native tongue, so long will he remain a community apart. If it were possible to gather in all the Indian children and retain them for a certain period, there would be produced a generation of English speaking only Indians, accustomed to the ways of civilized life, and the Indian problem would be solved."

The Indian Act of 1867 stated that no Indian could own land. The government held legal title; reserve lands were Federal property and still are today, with the exception of those nations who have settled their Land Claims. Indian people are still "wards" of the government. The government would decide who was and was not an Indian. Enfranchisement rules were expanded to include that anyone who received a university education was automatically no longer an Indian. A Native woman marrying a non-Indian became a non-Indian. This was finally reversed in 1985 under Bill C-31. Indians were forbidden to kill for food or sell any cattle they owned. Indians required a written permit to go off reserve. This was in effect until 1951.

Until 1960 the only way an Aboriginal person could vote in the Provincial or Federal elections in Canada was to give up their status as an Indian under the Indian Act.

The impact of all these tactics to assimilate Aboriginal people into the main stream culture caused alcoholism, family break up, family violence and crime statistics and suicide rates to rise in an alarming fashion.

The forced stay in Residential Schools left Aboriginal people with a loss of identity, few parenting skills, abuse issues and trauma that went untreated and unrecognised. They were virtually outcasts in their own country. Strangers to reserve life, unaccepted in urban centres and without the skills to survive on their traditional lands.

Immediately upon the closing of most of the Residential Schools in the sixties and seventies came the next major tragedy in Aboriginal history. This was known as the "Sixties Scoop." Aboriginal children from across Canada were taken from their homes and placed into foster care or adopted out, both in Canada and the United States, to non-Aboriginal homes. This continued from the early 60s to the 80s. This deadly form of assimilation ensured that family ties and all communication with their home communities was ended, since adoption records could only be opened at the request of both the child and the parents of that child.

Just as the closing of the residential schools did not mean the legacy of suffering instantly vanished, the end of the Sixties Scoop did not mean that all the native adoptees who were farmed out to abusive or alienating non-native families suddenly found themselves with a clear-cut identity or a secure place in society.

Indeed, many still found themselves not only "torn between two worlds," but also literally unsure if they were Aboriginal at all and not French or Italian as their adoptive parents claimed. Their birth records were sealed and often amended to include the names of the adoptive, rather than biological parents. Moreover, their adoption records were in many cases inaccurate, incomplete, falsified or simply missing. As a result, many Aboriginal adoptees who did try to locate their birth parents or confirm their Indian status wasted literally decades on failed searches or frustrating battles with Children's Aid authorities or Indian Affairs officials.

At one point in the 60's it is estimated that 85% of all Aboriginal children, including First Nations, Inuit and Metis, were in some type of care, Residential School, foster care or adopted by non-native families. It was in fact a major attempt at cultural genocide.

Statistics from the Department of Indian Affairs reveal a total of 11,132 status Indian children adopted between the years of 1960 and 1990. It is believed, however, that the actual numbers are much higher than that. While Indian Affairs recorded adoptions of 'status' native children, many native children, Metis and Inuit were not recorded in adoption or foster care records. Indeed, many 'status' children were not recorded as status after adoption. Of these children who were adopted, 70% were adopted into non-native homes.

In the 70's and 80's there was resurgence of interest in learning about Aboriginal Spirituality/Culture. As the Aboriginal children of this attempt at cultural genocide came of age, attitudes and the legal system were changing in Canadian society, thus opening the door to seeking out their Aboriginal heritage, returning to their roots through Aboriginal Spirituality. Many sought out the Elders and Healers, both in Canada and the United States and started the long journey towards healing and finding their place in today's society. Those that were unable to move forward and come to terms with their heritage remained in a state of dysfunction, turning to alcohol and drugs to cover the pain, suffering, humiliation and lost that they had endured.

Many of these men and women have ended up in the federal correctional system. It is these people, for the most part, that account for the high percentage of Aboriginal offenders, as compared to the Aboriginal population of Canada.

Upon entering a federal correctional facility, many of these people come in contact with their culture and spiritual ceremonies for the first time in their lives. Through the guidance and teachings of the Elders/Spiritual Advisors who work in corrections, they are made aware of whom they are. Through ceremonies, teachings and one to one counselling they begin to understand where their violent tendencies originate. In coming to this understanding they begin the long journey of their healing.

Aboriginal ceremonies are intended to help a person understand their life, both the negative and the positive. To look clearly at the weaknesses and strengths, accepting what they can not change and learning to live with all aspects of themselves. The teachings of the Elders tell us that we must bring the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental aspects of our lives in balance before we can move forward.

In our federal system offenders are helped through this process by the Elders who provide one to one counselling services that allow them to identify the issues in their lives. Through Aboriginal Programming, that helps them understand the acts they have committed and how to learn from their mistakes and move forward in a positive manner. Most importantly through the spiritual ceremonies that allow them a sacred place to express their remorse, pray for forgiveness both from the Creator and their victims, heal from the dysfunction's of the past and commit to a positive future.

This way of healing is very different from the way CSC has historically viewed offenders. As often the offender's crimes, both past and present, become the main focus of programming and case management. In the Aboriginal way of healing, that is only one part of the process. Before someone can understand and change the patterns of their lives, they must first understand why and how those patterns were formed.

In order to understand and help Aboriginal offenders heal it is necessary to determine what has been the bases of their lives before incarceration. Aboriginals come from many different backgrounds, some have lived most of their lives in the bush, some have been raised on reserves and some have been raised in the urban areas of Canada. Some have no knowledge of their spiritual/cultural heritage, some have a little knowledge and some know quite a bit about the ceremonies and teachings, but because of their dysfunctional upbringing are unable to apply these to their own lives. Correctional Service Canada is now working to apply both the Gladue principles of evaluating Aboriginal offenders and the Restorative Justice principles in determining reintegration alternatives.

For Aboriginal offenders it will take time and patience before these ideas are understood and can be accepted in relationship to their own lives. Many may learn a little, become afraid of facing themselves and the abuse they have suffered, they then may turn away from the teachings for awhile, often being released and then re-offending. Our understanding of Aboriginal Spirituality tells us that everyone learns in his or her own time and in his or her own way.

Others were born with their addictions and suffer from mental, emotional and physical illnesses that prevent them from fully understanding the concepts that are presented. However, it is also this group that benefits the most from Aboriginal Programming, because these programs are based on spirituality and are presented in both an oral and visual way that is easier for Aboriginal offenders to understand and relate to.

Not every Aboriginal offender wants, or is ready, to accept Aboriginal Spirituality as a way of healing their lives. Some were raised within the Christian religion and have no wish or need to change their belief system. Others have embraced other belief systems and do not wish to change. Some are so lost in their own pain and addictions that they are unable to fully or truly accept any concept or belief in a higher power at this time in their life.

It is important to understand that Aboriginal offenders come from many different backgrounds. In British Columbia alone, there are at least four major forms of spirituality. (Longhouse, Potlatch, Christianity and Prairie/Sweat Lodge teachings). There are, according to the Department of Indian Affairs, 197 different bands in British Columbia alone and 8 major language groups. When you realize that we are receiving Aboriginal, Metis and Inuit offenders from all over Canada and the United States it is easy to understand why there can be no definitive definition of either Aboriginal Spirituality or cultural traditions and practices. However, there is the universal background that Aboriginal people have in common, which this section has tried to outline for you.

There is one common saying that is used by most Aboriginal people, it is "All My Relations", meaning may you walk in balance and harmony with all living things upon Mother Earth.

Suggested Reading:

**Aboriginal Spirituality Guide for the Pacific Region
Black Elk Speaks by John G. Neihardt
Our Elders Speak by Karie Garnier
Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
Return to the Teachings – Exploring Aboriginal Justice by Rupert Ross
Offering Smoke by Jordan Paper
Blood of the Land by Rex Weyler
Mitakuye Oyasin "We are all related" by Dr. A.C. Ross
Gift of Power by Archie Fire Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes
The Sacred Pipe by Joseph Epes Brown
A Feather Not A Gravel by A. C. Hamilton
Gladue Decision**

**RECOGNIZED TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL FOOD LIST FOR THE PACIFIC REGION –
CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA**

Prepared by Sharron Whitewolf John, Regional Elder – August, 2004

NOTE: This list may be updated from time to time as new items are brought to our attention:

FROM THE WATER:



(Smoked/Dried/canned/jarred)

Salmon, Cod, Whitefish, Snapper, Trout, Flounder, Herring, Oolichans, Smelts, Char, Halibut, Octopus, Seal, Sea Lion, Whale, Herring Eggs, Salmon Eggs, Clams, Mussels, Abalone, Barnacles, Cockles, Sea Prunes, Sea Cucumber, Prawns, Shrimp, Sea Urchin, Eel, Turtle, Sturgeon, Lobster, Mullet, Goldeye

FROM THE LAND:



(Sliced/Roast/Stew/Soup/Dried/Canned/Jerky)

Buffalo, Deer, Elk, Moose, Beaver, Groundhog, Squirrel, Goat, Rabbit, Pheasant, Bear, Sheep, Caribou, Rain Deer, Porcupine, Muskrat, Elk

FROM THE SKY:



Sliced/Roast/Stew/Soup/Canned

Duck, Partridge, Geese, Pheasant, Quail, Turkey, Prairie Chicken, Grouse, Goose Eggs, Duck Eggs, Sea Weed, Shellfish, Sea Gull Eggs

FROM MOTHER EARTH:



BERRIES AND VEGTABLES

(Fresh/Dried/Canned)

Wild Celery, Watercress, Wild asparagus, Bitter Root, Wild turnips, Camus, Rosehips, Sunflowers, Onions, Potatoes, Carrots, Fiddleheads, Fern Shoots, Mushrooms, Pigweed, Stinging Nettles, Dandelion Greens, Seaweed, Apples, Soapberries, Huckleberries, Cranberries, Blueberries, Strawberries, Wild Rhubarb, Raspberries, Saskatoon Berries, Gooseberries, Blackberries, Thimbleberries, Elderberries, Currants, Wild Crapapples, Oregon grape, Wild Cherries, Wild Plums, Salalberries, Corn, Salmon Berries, Bunch berries, Choke cherry, Black Caps, Red Caps, Squash, Tomatoes, Acorns, Beans, Peas, Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Leeks

BREAD AND CEREALS



Rice, Rice Root, Bannock (Baked or Fried), Oatmeal/mush

OTHER FOODS



Maple syrup (sugar), Indian teas, Certain tree barks, Sap, Grease from certain animals and fish, Chilies, Sunflower Seeds, Gum, Nut Butter, Meal, Corn Meal, Cattail Flour, Honey, Sea Salt, Pepper

OFFENDER'S PERSONAL SPIRITUAL EFFECTS FORM

Offenders Name _____ **FPS#** _____

Has permission to have the following Sacred items in their personal spiritual effects.

The following are for the personal use of the offender either within his cell or in ceremony, in keeping with CD 702.

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Sweet Grass | Smudge Bowl | Herbal Smudges |
| Print Cloth | Tobacco Ties | Small Stones |
| Feathers | Head Band | Medicine Pouch |
| Ribbon Shirt | Bear Root | Rat Root |
| Devils Club | Wood Matches | Claws |
| Tobacco | Fungus | Rattles |
| Hand Drum | | |

Other related items:

In order to remain valid this authorization must be attached to the offender's personal spiritual effects at all times and available to staff upon request. Items being added to or deleted from the spiritual effects must be initialed by the Elder/Spiritual Advisor and dated.

Elder/Spiritual Advisor _____ **Date** _____

A&D Officer _____ **Date** _____

Offender _____ **Date** _____

There are 197 First Nation Bands in British Columbia:

**Adams Lake
Ahousaht
Aitchelitz +
Alexandria
Alexis Creek
Ashcroft
Beecher Bay
Blueberry River
Bonaparte
Boothroyd (Chomok)
Boston Bar
Bridge River
Burns Lake
Burrard (Tseil Waututh)
Campbell River
Canim Lake
Canoe Creek
Cape Mudge
Cayoose Creek
Chawathil +
Cheam +
Chehalis +
Chemainus
Cheslatta Carrier Nation
Coldwater
Columbia Lake
Comox
Cook's Ferry
Cowichan
Da'naxda'xw
Ditidaht
Doig River
Douglas
Ehattesaht
Esketemc (Alkali Lake)
Esquimalt Fort Nelson
Fountain
Gingolx
Gitanmaax
Gitanyow
Gitlakdamix
Gitsegukla
Gitwangak
Gitwinksihlkw (Canyon City)
Glen Vowell
Gwa'Sala-Nakwaxda'xw
Gwawaenuk Tribe
Hagwilget Village
Halalt
Halfway River
Hartley Bay
Heiltsuk (Bella Bella)
Hesquiaht
High Bar
Homalco
Hupaçasath**

**Nadleh Whuten
Nak'azdli
Namgis
Nanoose
Nazko
Nee-Tahi-Buhn
Neskonlith
New Westminster
Nicola
Nicomen
Nooaitch
North Thompson
Nuchatlaht
Nuxalk (Bella Coola)
Okanagan
Old Massett Village Council
Oregon Jack Creek
Osoyoos
Oweekeno
Pacheedaht
Pauquachin
Pavilion
Penelakut
Penticton
Peters
Popkum +
Prophet River Band
Qualicum First Nation
Quatsino Red Bluff
Saik'uz
Samahquam
Saulteau
Scowlitz +
Seabird Island +
Sechelt
Semiahmoo
Secwepemc
Seton Lake
Shackan
Shxw'ow'hamel +
Siska
Skawahlook +
Skeetchestn
Skidegate
Skookumchuck
Skowkale +
Skuppah
Skwah +
Skway +
Sliammon
Snuneymuxw
Soda Creek
Songhees
Soowahlie +
Spallumcheen
Spuzzum**

Huu-ay-aht Iskut
 Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k:tes7et'h'
 Kamloops
 Kanaka Bar
 Katzie
 Kispiox
 Kitamaat
 Kitasoo
 Kitkatla
 Kitselas
 Kitsumkalum
 Klahoose
 Kluskus
 Kwadacha
 Kwakiutl
 Kwantlen +
 Kwaw-kwaw-Apilt +
 Kwayhquitlum (Coquitlam)
 Kwiakah
 Kwicksutaineuk-ah-kwaw-ah-mish
 Lakahahmen +
 Lakalzap
 Lake Babine
 Lake Cowichan
 Lax-kw'alaams
 Lheidli T'enneh
 Little Shuswap Lake
 Lower Kootenay
 Lower Nicola
 Lower Similkameen
 Lyackson
 Lytton
 Malahat
 Mamalilikulla
 Matsqui +
 McLeod Lake
 Metlakatla
 Moricetown
 Mount Currie
 Mowachaht/Muchalaht
 Musqueam N'Quatqua

Squamish
 Squiala +
 St. Mary's
 Stelat'en
 Stone
 Sumas +
 T'it'kit
 T'Sou-ke
 Tahltan
 Takla Lake
 Tl'azt'en
 Tl'etinqox-t'in (Anahim)
 Tla-o-qui-aht (Clayoquot)
 Tlatlasikwala
 Tlowitsis Tribe
 Tobacco Plains
 Toosey
 Toquaht
 Tsartlip
 Tsawataineuk
 Tsawout
 Tsawwassen
 Tsay Keh Dene
 Tseshaht
 Tseycum
 Tzeachten Uchucklesaht +
 Ucluelet
 Ulkatcho
 Union Bar +
 Upper Nicola
 Upper Similkameen
 West Moberly
 Westbank
 Wet'suwet'en
 Whispering Pines (Clinton)
 Williams Lake
 Xení Gwet'in
 Yakwekwioose +
 Yale +
 Yekooche

Table One: Existing British Columbia Aboriginal Languages

1. Tlingit (isolate)
2. Haida (isolate)
3. Tsimshian
 - a) Smalgyax (Coast Tsimshian)
 - b) Southern Tsimshian
 - c) Nisga.a
 - d) Gitxsan
4. Wakashan
 - a) Kwakw'ala
 - b) Haisla
 - c) Heiltsuk
 - d) Oweekeno
 - e) Nuchaanulth
 - f) Dididaht
5. Salish
 - Coast Salish:* a) Halq'emeylem
 - b) Squamish
 - c) Cowichan
 - d) Comox
 - e) Songish
 - f) Semiahmoo
 - g) Sishiatl (Sechelt)
 - h) Nuxalk (Bella Coola)
 - Interior Salish:*
 - a) St'at'imc (Lillooet)
 - b) Secwepemc (Shuswap)
 - c) Nlakapmx (Thompson) d) Nsilx (Okanagan)
6. Athapaskan
 - a) Carrier (Dakelh)

b) Wet'suwet'en

c) Tsilhqot'in

d) Sekani

e) Dunne-za (Beaver)

f) Slavey

g) Kaska

h) Tahltan

7. Ktunaxa (Kutenai) (isolate)

8. Algonquian

Cree