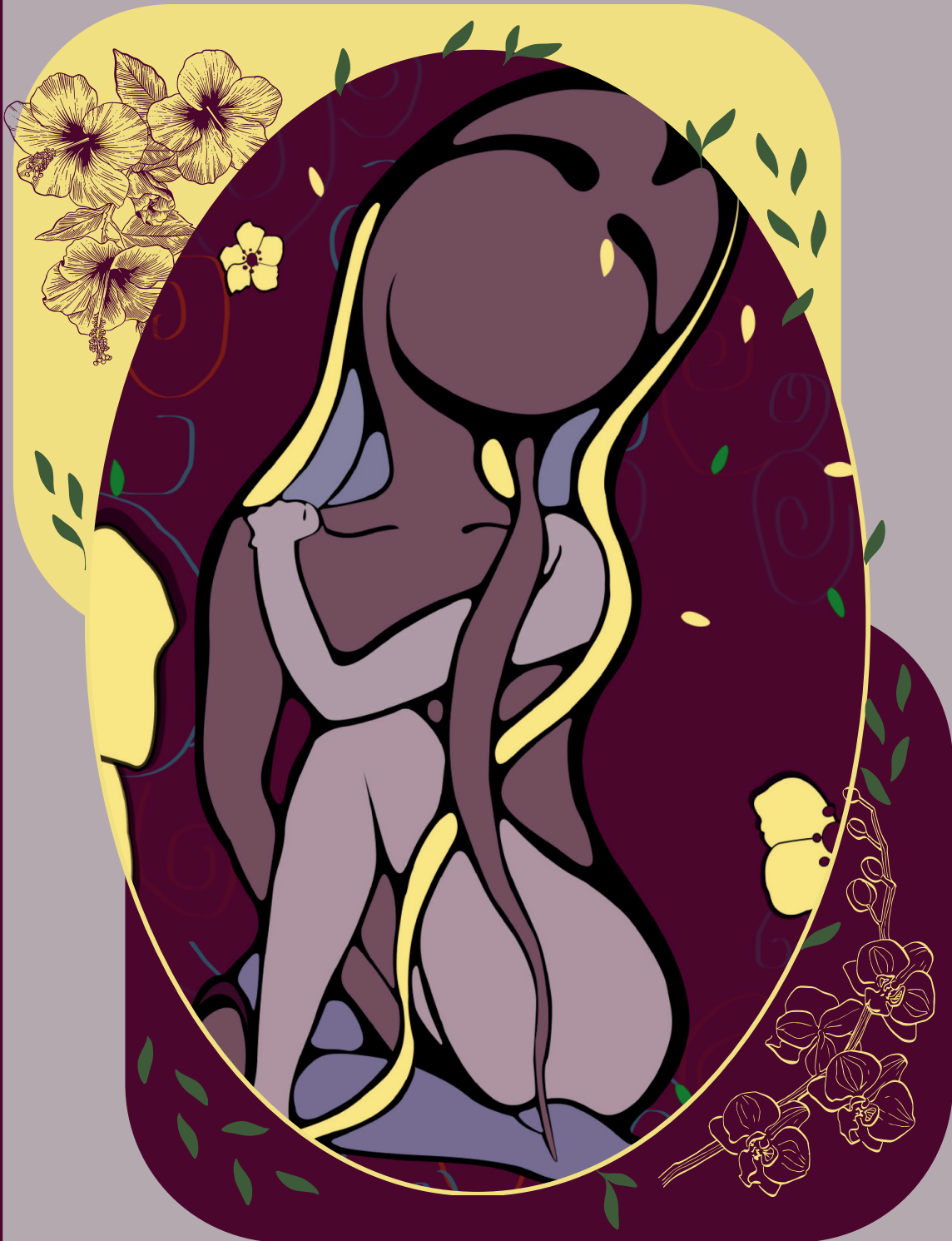


CIRCLE OF CARE

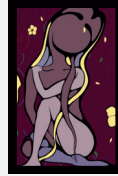
Ceremony Manual



Purple Woman

Ceremony manual cover art

“Purple Woman”
Ceremony manual cover art



“When I look at that picture, I see a woman on there hugging herself, loving herself. And there's like two different colors to the woman. Like maybe the other side of herself where her arm is down, it's like maybe what other people see, but on the inside, she's hugging herself, loving herself; know that she is a woman: creator's gift, a life-giver, a water carrier.” –
Feedback Session Participant



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OUR TEAM

This ceremony manual stems from a research project guided by Indigenous people and their allies who conduct health research and provide access to harm reduction and health services.

Co-Principal Investigators

- **Anita C. Benoit** - Assistant Professor, Department of Health and Society, University of Toronto Scarborough, Scarborough, Ontario
- **Holly Gauvin** - Executive Director, Elevate NWO, Thunder Bay, Ontario,
- **Meghan Young** - Executive Director, Oahas, Barrie, Ontario

Co-Investigators and Knowledge Users

- **Candida Sinoway** - Research Assistant, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Linda Barkman** - Elder, Elevate NWO, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Chris Sanders** - Associate Professor, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Elaine Toombs** - Adjunct Professor, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Melissa Deschamps** - Community Prevention Worker, Oahas, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Chris Mushquash** - Professor, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Cultural Leaders and Facilitators of the Ceremony

- **Linda Barkman** - Elder, Elevate NWO, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Candida Sinoway** - Research Assistant, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Melissa Deschamps** - Community Prevention Worker, Oahas, Thunder Bay, Ontario

Manual Writing Team

- **Emily Pullen** - Research Assistant in KTE, University of Toronto Scarborough
- **Nana Koomson** - Research Assistant in KTE, University of Toronto Scarborough

Acknowledgment of Former Team Members

- **Jasmine Cotnam** - Research Assistant, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Tonya Muchano** - Former Director of Client Services, Elevate NWO
- **Marni Amirault** - Former Community-Based Research Manager, CAAN, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
- **Rene Boucher** - Former Elevate Research Coordinator, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- **Sherri Pooyak** - Community-Based Research Manager, CAAN, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge and thank the stewards of the land on which our research project is conducted. The Anishinabek, which includes the Ojibwa of Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. The traditional lands of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and the Wahnapiatae First Nations. The traditional territory of the Anishnaabeg, specifically the Garden River and Batchewana First Nations, as well as Métis People. The traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples.

We recognize our ancestors from the past, present, and future and our relationships to the water, land, animals and plants.



Smudging

Smudging is a sacred ceremony that many Indigenous groups across the world practice and all 4 medicines can be used. Typically, Elder Barkman will use an abalone shell (container representing water element) in which white buffalo sage is lighted (fire element). Sage leaves or a bundle of sage (earth element) may be used. The feather is used to fan the smoke (air element). The order of smudging goes around in a circle. However, at our site, smudging material is also available upon entry where individuals may smudge independently.

Smudging cleanses away the negative thoughts. Facing the Elder and using your hands, you may inhale the smoke and fan it over your eyes, ears, mouth, heart and any other body part you wish so that the senses associated with those parts - for example seeing, hearing, saying or feeling - are positive or good thoughts. Many people may ask the Elder to also smudge their back by turning around.

If you are unable to smudge with smoke you can boil the medicine, let it cool, and put in a spray bottle.



Some people may remove their jewelry, eyewear or other things they are wearing and smudge it separately.

After smudging is completed, the ashes can be returned to the earth where the negative thoughts have been absorbed by the ashes.

ABOUT THE CIRCLE OF CARE RESEARCH STUDY

Building an Indigenous Healing Program

This manual was developed through the Circle of Care research study which aimed to build an Indigenous Healing Program consisting of Bundles of Ceremony. The program was built from the feedback of Indigenous service providers who deliver cultural and emergency services, and Indigenous women who use these services in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Both were asked to share the Indigenous cultural services they deliver, use or desire using as well as to share what they may have learned from their ancestors.

Knowledge Carriers such as an Elder, Helpers and others with cultural wisdom delivered the program shaping it from local knowledge.

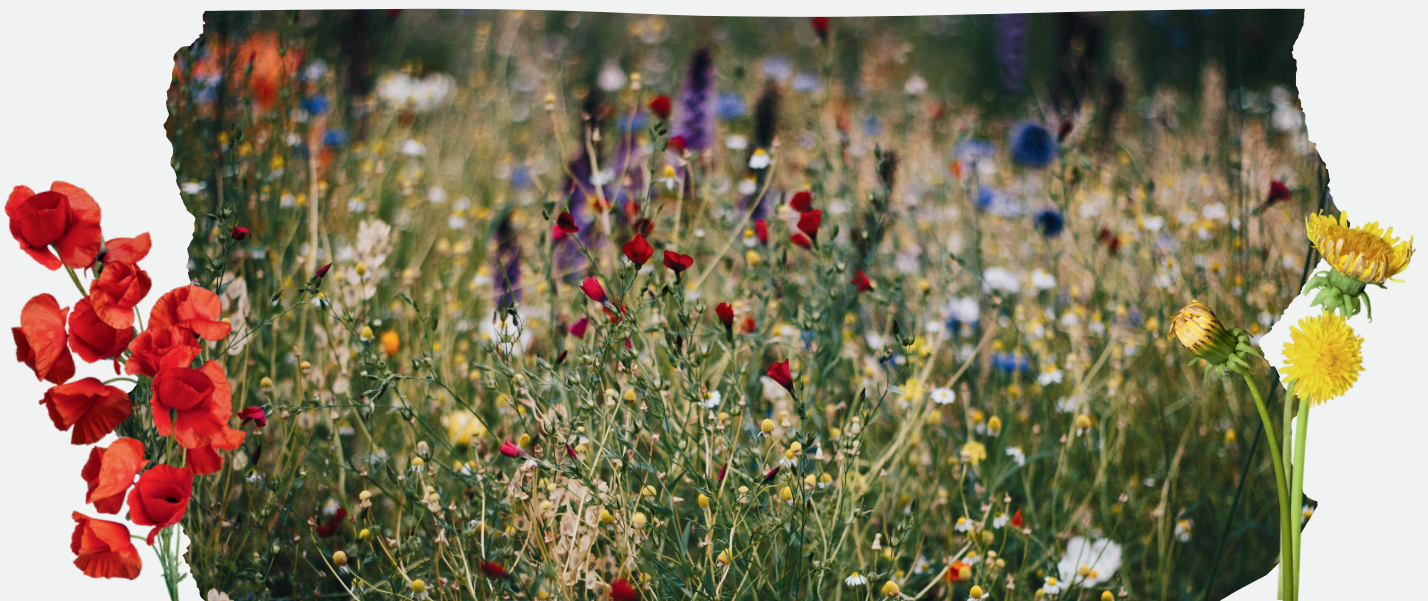
As Indigenous women learn and practice their culture, it is anticipated that they will be able to build their own Circle of Care with the services available at Oahas and Elevate NWO. These services include mainstream approaches such as those delivered by nurses and case managers, but also those delivered by the Elder and Helpers which includes ceremonies and cultural practices.

ABOUT THE CIRCLE OF CARE RESEARCH STUDY

Creating the Ceremony Manual

We are grateful for the knowledge, experiences, and wisdom of the Indigenous women who reviewed and provided feedback on the manual created in part from information shared by Indigenous service providers and brought to life by Elder Linda Barkman and her Helpers, Candida Sinoway and Melissa Deschamps. We hope that it aids future clients learn more about ceremony, associated activities and how it may unfold at our sites.

The teachings from each ceremony highlighted in this manual are shared in “Anishinabe Proud to Be - Teachings”.





Coming Home Ceremony

Coming Home Ceremony

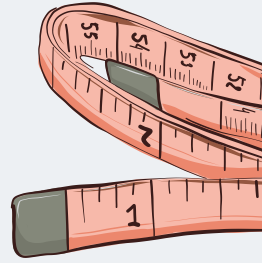
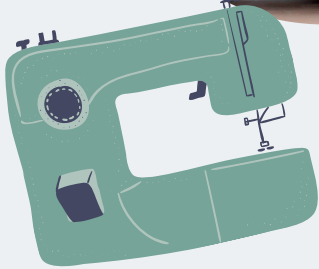
A Coming Home Ceremony, also called a Welcome Home Ceremony, feels different for different people even when the activities are the same. Each individual comes into it with a different intention. This ceremony grounds attendees and establishes a safe and welcoming space. It reflects stepping back into traditional life and how they do this depends on where they are in their journey.

Our Ceremony will be organic and flexible, but it can be more structured depending on who delivers it. For our women leading up to the Ceremony, there are several teaching circles to learn about each other, sew cloth bags for feast (bowls, plates, utensils), medicine (tobacco, sage, sweetgrass and tobacco), or personal ceremony bundles; and sew ribbon skirts or shirts. These bonding opportunities support sharing teachings, experiences or feelings. A space is established to ensure that each woman has their own baskets with sewing kit materials (e.g., scissors, thread, measuring tape, needles, pins) and ample room to add to the basket. Finally, the Coming Home Ceremony involves blessing the ceremonial tools (i.e., ribbon skirt or shirt, cloth bags) created for their bundles which supports their participation in future ceremonies and concludes with a feast.

In our Ceremony, the Helper shared moontime teachings from her grandmother. At the end of the day, the women were asked how they feel and how this might be reflected by a symbol (e.g., I feel like an earring because it is sparkly and beautiful, I feel like a leaf because it is free flowing).



MEET AND GREET



Meet and Greet Bundles

Materials

- General sewing items
 - Thread, needles, thimbles, bobbins, sewing machines, scissors, measuring tape
- Bags
 - Fabric, cords
- Gifting items
 - Plates, bowls, utensils, medicines

Activities

1. Smudge, share a meal and smudge the food.
2. Discuss what can be in the bundles: abalone shell, medicines, and personal items, including items that hold meaning to you.
3. Sew bundle bags to carry personal items, medicines, feast items.
4. Share teachings about the feast bundle.



Sewing Ribbon Skirts and Shirts

Materials

- General sewing items
 - Thread, needles, thimbles, bobbins, sewing machines, scissors, measuring tape, sewing machine
- Skirts
 - Fabric, ribbons, cord to create a drawstring
- Shirts
 - Long sleeve button up shirt, ribbons
- Gift items
 - Copper cups, reusable water bottles

Two-Spirit and gender nonconforming people may prefer ribbon shirts or garments other than a skirt.



Activities

1. Smudge, share a meal and smudge the food.
2. Sew ribbon skirts and shirts.
3. Share teachings related to ribbon skirts and shirts as well as copper cups and smudging.
4. Gift items to accompany the teachings.
5. Ceremony is held once the ribbon skirts or shirts are completed.

Teachings should be repeatedly shared throughout each session to accommodate women who missed a session or newly joined the group.



Feast

Materials

- Preparation material and food items for cooking the feast
 - Catered meal may be prepared or a potluck could be held
- Ceremonial items or other tools to be blessed brought by attendees
- Medicines and other material for smudging (i.e., abalone shell)
- Drum, drum stick or rattle

Activities

- Smudge self.
- Bless items brought by attendees.
- Smudge the meal and feast.



Feasts can be an individual or group event, and may include drumming, singing, and traditional dancing. Tobacco is always offered.

Feasting is a way to honour and respect those in our lives, it is also a way to strengthen our bodies and spirit.