



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE :
ADDRESSING YOUTH DATING VIOLENCE

Incorporating Indigenous Culture, Ceremony and Traditions

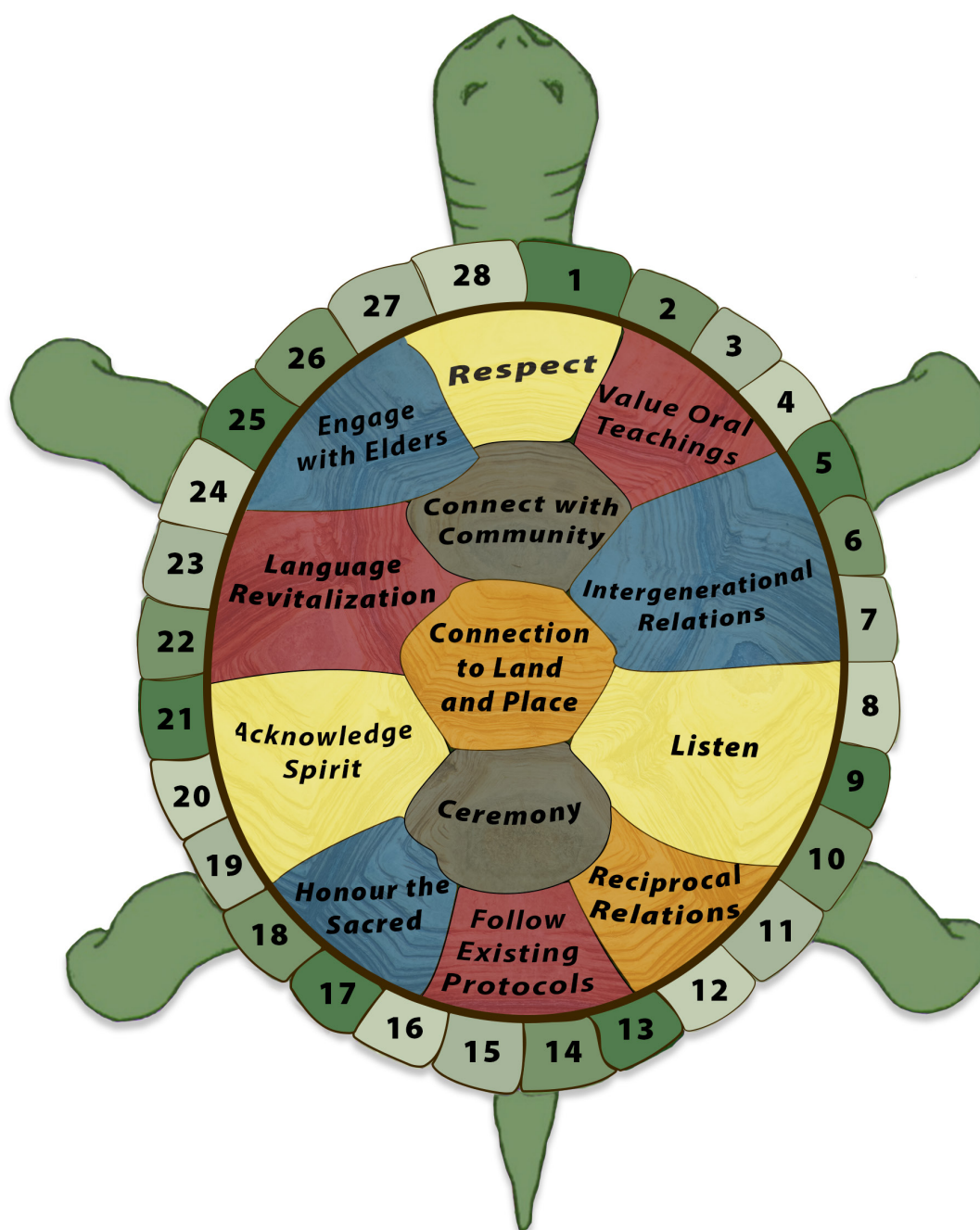
Prepared by Angie Cote and Richelle Ready
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Incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing

The following are offered as suggestions, as **starting places**. The incorporation of Indigenous culture, ceremony, and traditions within a **digital or non-digital world** is not a journey that can be partaken alone, this is a journey that requires **connection and engagement** with community members, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Knowledge Holders, and Cultural Helpers of the land you are working on and with. It is a journey that requires guidance from the teachers of the lands you are working on and with. These teachers are community members, participants, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Knowledge Holders, and Cultural Helpers who **live on, work with, connect with,** and **love the land** you are on. These are invitations to learn more, listen more, connect more, and create opportunities to begin to bring Indigenous ways of knowing, culture, ceremony and traditions into the work you are doing, wherever you are doing this work—all across Turtle Island creating experiences of interconnectedness from ocean to ocean.

Turtle Island is the land now known as North America, as this land sat on the back of a giant turtle. It was **Grandmother Turtle** who offered the earth to be placed on her back, and when the earth was placed on her back, the piece of earth expanded until it became host to Mother Earth (The Sky Woman Creation Story shared by Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples of Canada and the United States). Grandmother Turtle is a symbol of truth and the markings on the shell of Turtle confirm the truth. There are **thirteen sections**, representing the thirteen cycles of the moon that it takes for the Earth to revolve around the sun, and there are **twenty-eight** markings circling the shell of Turtle, representing the cycle of the moon. Grandmother Turtle carries knowledge, offers Truth, and her shell protects that knowledge and, yet, Grandmother Turtle does not rush. Grandmother Turtle understands, as you should, that **the journey is as important as the destination**.

As you ponder these suggestions for the incorporation of Indigenous culture, ceremony, and traditions within the digital world of curriculum and programming, know that the journey is just as important as the delivery. Take time to create **meaningful and reciprocal relationships and connections**. Listen to the guidance of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Knowledge Holders, Cultural Helpers and community members and participants. The thirteen circles on Grandmother Turtle's back offer reflection of Indigenous pedagogy and how Indigenous knowledge can be shared and taught. The twenty-eight markings circling the shell of Grandmother Turtle provide teachings, guidance, and actions you can take to incorporate Indigenous culture, ceremony, and traditions within our shared world, including within the digital realm. Know that these teachings exist within a circle, with no beginning, no middle, and no end, each connected to the other and one teaching just as important as another.



1. Cedar **2.** Provide Medicines **3.** Feed Elders First **4.** Be Open to Modifications **5.** Follow Guidance of Cultural Helpers **6.** Storytelling **7.** Openness to New and Different Teachings **8.** Tobacco **9.** Use Mute Button **10.** Do not Interrupt **11.** Space for Everyone to Speak **12.** Offer Yourself Compassion Regarding Mistakes **13.** Initiate Relations with Protocols **14.** Arrange for and Share Food **15.** Sweetgrass **16.** Calling in Songs **17.** Begin with a Smudge **18.** Offer Gifts **19.** Research and Learn Protocols for the Land You Are On **20.** Learn the History **21.** Continue to Learn **22.** Acknowledge and Create Space for Differences between Elders and Communities **23.** Sage **24.** Elders Speak First **25.** Learn about the Peoples You Are Working With **26.** Learn About the Land You Are On **27.** Acknowledge the Land **28.** Space for Language to be Shared

Figure 1; Legend of Change: Combining the Old Ways and the New Ways. Created by Cote and Ready, 2021.

Examples for Incorporation of Indigenous Culture, Ceremony and Traditions

Listen to the guidance of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Knowledge Holders, Cultural Helpers and community members and participants. **Learn** about the culture, ceremonies, and traditions of the lands you are working on from Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, Cultural Helpers and community members and participants. It is important to realize that each Indigenous culture, each Indigenous ceremony, each Indigenous tradition is **unique** and you need to be **in relationship with** someone (Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, Cultural Helpers and community members) from the land you are working on to do this work and incorporate Indigenous culture, ceremony, and traditions.

The twenty-eight markings around Grandmother's Turtle's shell represent the actions you can take to include Indigenous teachings, culture, ceremonies, and traditions within digital and non-digital relations. Know that these actions must always be guided by the thirteen circles on Grandmother Turtle's shell that teach of Indigenous ways of knowing. The following are offered as **examples** of how to incorporate Indigenous culture, ceremony, and traditions within a **non-digital** and **digital world**.

1. Learn About the Traditions and Practices of the Region

Learn about the **traditions and practices** of the region you are residing in and working in prior to inviting Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper to participate in your programming. It may be respectful in the region you are residing in and working in to offer **Tobacco or a gift** prior to asking a request of an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper. In a **non-digital setting**, make arrangements to offer the Tobacco or gift to the individual you are seeking guidance or participation from prior to or at the

time you are making the request of the individual you are seeking

guidance from. In a **digital setting**, you may need to make

arrangements to drop off Tobacco or a gift prior to making the

request of the individual you are seeking guidance from and

ensure that all **safety measures and precautions** are being

followed. It is important to follow the guidance of an Elder,

Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper from

the region you are working within, as well as any necessary

safety measures to keep these everyone safe.



2. Invite an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper to Open Your Meeting

Invite an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper to **open your meeting or gathering** in the manner that they choose. In a **non-digital setting**, this may mean that a **smudge** is prepared by the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper and then passed throughout the participants so that each participant can smudge. The Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper may offer teachings about the Medicines within the smudge, as well as teachings about the smudge. The Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper may also share a calling in **song or prayer** to begin the meeting or gathering in a good way.

In a **digital setting**, this may mean that the meeting or gathering begins with a **virtual smudge**, with teachings of the Medicines used being shared, teachings of smudging being shared, prayers and teachings being shared, and a calling in song being offered. These ceremonies are offered before the other activities of the meeting or gathering begin to open the meeting in a good way.



3. Have Medicines Available for Smudging and Ceremony

In a **non-digital setting**, you may have Medicines available for participants to use for smudging and ceremony. Seek guidance from an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or a Cultural Helper about how to offer Medicines and how to ensure that the Medicines you have available are **offered in a good way**.

In a **digital setting**, arrange for Medicine boxes to be prepared and offered to the participants **prior to the meeting** so that they can participate in smudging and ceremonies in their **own spaces**, while meeting digitally. These Medicine boxes may include Tobacco, Sweetgrass, Sage, and Cedar, as well as an abalone shell or other smudging dish and matches for lighting the Medicines. You may wish to include written teachings about the Medicines within the box or invite an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper to share teachings about the Medicines the next time folks gather together digitally. Listen to the guidance of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Knowledge Holders, and Cultural Helpers regarding harvesting, purchasing, or gathering Medicines to ensure that it is done in a good way. Know that there are different teachings regarding harvesting, purchasing, and gathering Medicines and be respectful and honour the teachings offered to you by the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder or Cultural Helper you are working with.

4. Invite an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper to Share Teachings or Stories

In a **non-digital setting** or a **digital setting**, invite an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper to **share teachings** or **stories** related to the topics you are discussing within the meeting or gathering. A meeting with the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper prior to the gathering or meeting to discuss the themes and topics you hope to share about in the upcoming meeting is recommended, as well as an offering of Tobacco or a gift. If you are sharing within a **digital setting**, ensure that the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper is **comfortable** sharing the teachings or stories within a digital setting, as not everyone is comfortable sharing within the digital realm and not every teaching and story is suitable to be shared within the digital realm.



5. Use Sharing Circles

In a **non-digital setting**, use **Sharing Circles** or **Talking Circles** as a way of **including everyone's voice** and **honouring the experiences** of all participants. Seek guidance from an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper about which circle would be the best for your group of participants and the topic you are discussing. Within a Talking Circle, there may be an **item** passed around in the circle, as a way to honour whose turn it is to speak, and there may be one pointed question that is asked and participants are encouraged to answer. Within a Sharing Circle, there is a topic proposed to be discussed; however, participants are encouraged to share whatever comes to mind about the topic and their experiences. Participants are encouraged to **listen** and not offer feedback or responses to the answers that others are providing.

In a **digital setting**, Sharing Circles and Talking Circles can still be used to honour everyone's voice and experiences, as well as give everyone a specific opportunity to share. Seek guidance from an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper about which circle would be the best for your group of participants and the topic you are discussing. Whose turn it is to share may be **facilitated and monitored** by the facilitator of the meeting or the gathering or by the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper. It is important that participants are **listening** when another participant is talking and everyone but the participant talking is **on mute**. The use of a Talking Circle or Sharing Circle with a digital setting is an important way to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to share and speak, as some participants may not feel comfortable speaking out within a larger setting.

6. Have Food Available

In a **non-digital setting**, for a meeting or gathering plan to **have food available** to share as a collective and as a **demonstration of caring** for the participants that are involved in the programming. This is an action of caring for the community, as well as a way to **seek equity in participation** in that you are providing for everyone's basic needs, so that they can all participate without worrying or concerning themselves about meeting their needs of survival. Offer and serve food to the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper **first**, prior to any other participants being served or eating. Follow the guidance of the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper about preparing and offering a **Spirit plate** following the gathering and sharing of the food.

Within a **digital setting**, prior to a meeting or gathering **arrange for food to be sent** to participants and the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper so that participants can share in a meal together, even while physically apart, and as a demonstration of caring and gratitude for the participants and the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper's participation. In a digital setting, **make arrangements to feed the community around the participants**, such as family members or partners in their home, so that the basic needs of folks are met during their participation. Follow the guidance of the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper about preparing and offering a Spirit plate following the gathering and sharing of the food.

7. Invite an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper to Close Your Meeting

Invite an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper to **close your meeting** or gathering in the manner that they choose. In a **non-digital setting**, this may mean that a smudge is prepared by the Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper and then passed throughout the participants so that each participant can **smudge**. The Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper may then offer teachings about the Medicines within the smudge, as well as teachings about the smudge. The Elder, Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or Cultural Helper may also share a **song or prayer** to end the meeting or gathering in a good way. In a **digital setting**, this may mean that the meeting or gathering ends with a virtual smudge, with teachings of the Medicines used, teachings of smudging being shared, prayers and teachings being shared, and a song being offered. These ceremonies are offered following all other activities of the meeting or gathering to end the meeting in a good way.



Resources

1. Guidebook to Indigenous Protocol (2019) written by Bob Joseph and retrieved from Indigenous Corporate Training Inc, www.ictinc.ca
2. Indigenous Relations: Insights, Tips, and Suggestions to Make Reconciliation a Reality (2019) written by Bob Joseph and Cynthia F. Joseph.
3. Seven Sacred Teachings: Niizhwaaswi gagiikwewin (2009) written by David Bouchard and Dr. Joseph Martin.
4. The Journey of the Spirit of the Red Man (2012) written at the Turtle Lodge by Harry Bone, Sherry Copenace, Dave Courchene, William Easter, Robert Greene, and Henry Skywater with contributions from Peter Atkinson and D'Arcy Linklater.
5. 2 Crees in a Pod, a podcast by Amber Dion and Terri Suntjens to unapologetically create space of Indigenous resurgence and disrupt western colonial systems and honour Indigenous helping practices.

About the Content Creators

Angie Cote

Angie Cote, BA., FOT and student of Reflexology & Reiki - Leading Standing Eagle Woman

Originally from Fisher River Cree Nation, and residing in Winnipeg, MB. Angie is currently Self-employed as a Holistic Healing Practitioner, and works with her husband as independent consultants in the areas of cultural knowledge, workshops, healing gatherings, and specialized individual services. She is a certified professional trainer, has a diploma and degree in postsecondary education in the areas of Rural & Aboriginal Community Development, certified as a Focusing Oriented Therapist, and is a helper in 7 sacred ways of healing trauma. She is a level 2 reiki practitioner and practices the traditional teachings. Angie has embraced immense responsibility as a sweat lodge keeper, full-moon ceremony teacher, Sundance Lodge Woman, Healing Ceremonies, 7 Sacred Ways of Healing Trauma helper, birth helper and cultural advisor.

Richelle Ready

Richelle Ready is a self-identifying Métis woman living in Treaty One Territory, in what is known as Winnipeg, Manitoba. She grew up in Winnipeg with her three siblings. Richelle's parents grew up in Brandon, Manitoba and her grandparents resided in rural western Manitoba. Richelle's Nana is a registered member of MMF with connections to the Red River Settlement. Richelle is a registered social worker, a yoga teacher, and the research coordinator for Ode Zhigo Ode: Heart to Heart Project. It is a project in partnership between Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. (Ndinawe) and the University of Manitoba that is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. Richelle currently lives, works, and resides in Winnipeg with her partner and dog and appreciates spending time in nature hiking in the lands surrounding Winnipeg.