

## Women's Wellness Journey Manual

Northern Ontario Women's Services  
Outreach and Partnership Enhancement  
(NOWSOPE)

## Acknowledgements

The Northern Ontario Women's Services Outreach and Partnership Enhancement project – NOWSOPE – focused on mitigating the impact and occurrence of homelessness among Aboriginal women with mental health and wellness challenges, by linking intervention to understanding violence against women and enhancing local service collaboration and capacity. Located in Sudbury, NOWSOPE was funded by the Human Resources and Skills Development of the Government of Canada under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, through YWCA Canada, and led locally by YWCA Sudbury.

Many people have contributed to the success of this initiative. When a community is able to pull its resources, experiences, and new ideas together in such a good way, everyone benefits. Firstly, acknowledgements need to be given to the Aboriginal women of lived experience who participated in the Our Sisters' Voices' focus groups and ensured their voices were heard. Also to the Aboriginal women who participated in the Women's Wellness Journey who, on their own, segued into a Northern Sisters' Voices circle.

The Aboriginal Women's Initiative would also like to acknowledge the agencies who took part in the planning of the focus groups, community consultations, intersectoral cross training, and the Women's Wellness Journey. Your expertise and willingness to work together is remarkable.

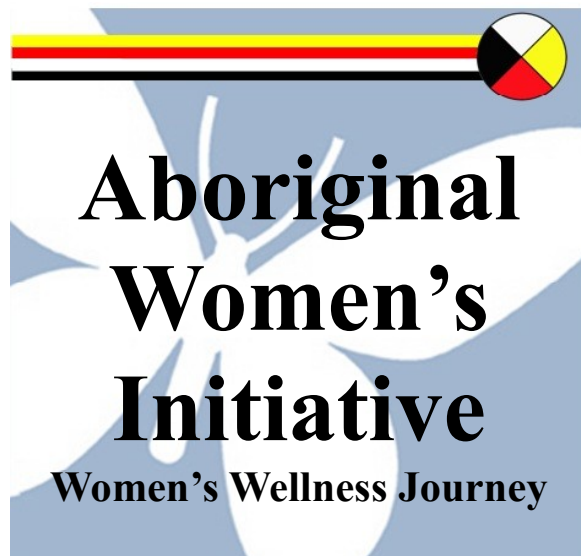
N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre  
Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre  
Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy  
Sudbury Action Centre for Youth  
Laurentian University, Indigenous Programs  
Cambrian College, Wabnode Centre  
Aboriginal Peoples Alliance (Northern Ontario)  
Sudbury Manitoulin Woman Abuse Screening Project  
Centre for Addictions & Mental Health  
Northern Initiative for Social Action  
Iris Addiction Recovery for Women  
Ministry of Community & Social Services

Sudbury Regional Hospital  
Sudbury District Health Unit  
Social Planning Council  
Sudbury Police Services  
Child & Family Centre  
Atikameksheng Anishinabek  
Correctional Services Canada  
Foyer Notre Dame  
Salvation Army  
Manitoulin Family Resources  
Elizabeth Fry Society  
Corner Clinic

Further acknowledgments are given to the Aboriginal Women's Initiative, Advisory Circle Elder, Winnifred Pitawanakwat for her gentle guidance and wisdom throughout the duration of the project. The following members of the Advisory Circle provided the project director with the guidance and nurturing that ensured the smooth delivery of the objectives:

Cynthia Belfitt, Barbara Burton, Carmen Leduc, Laura Pitura, Ann-Marie Recollet, Wanda Beaudry, Christina Agawa, Gail Charbonneau, Andrea Manitowabi, Marlene Gorman, Melanie Nabigon, Lise Armstrong, Ghislaine Goudreau, Marcella Guerin, Cindy Bertolo, Emily Fleming, Shelly Moore-Frappier, Sandra Fox, Rachel Noel-de-Tilly, Vivienne Martin, Kathryn Irwin-Seguín, Susan Manitowabi, Cristine Rego, Laura Hall, Jeff Westlake, John Keating, Ann Decker, and Amélie Roy.

Electronic version of the manual is available at [www.ywcacanada.ca](http://www.ywcacanada.ca) and [www.ywcacsubdury.ca](http://www.ywcacsubdury.ca)



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This manual is for agencies, groups, or individuals who are interested in hosting a Women's Wellness Journey for Aboriginal women.

This wellness journey is specifically for Aboriginal women, by Aboriginal women. The content of the wellness journey came specifically from Aboriginal women through focus groups conducted in the fall of 2010 and also from the literature review and Advisory Circle.

The focus groups were held at the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, Shkagamik-kwe Health Centre and YWCA Sudbury.

The focus group data was then collected and filtered into the seven Grandfather teachings framework, along with results from the literature review and Advisory Circle.

This wellness journey was first implemented in the fall of 2010 with the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre hosting. The Aboriginal women who took part in the journey gained knowledge using a cultural approach while learning not only from the facilitators, but also from each other.



# Summary of Aboriginal Women's Initiative

In 2010, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Sudbury received support from Human Resources Skills Development of Canada through YWCA Canada in order to increase our capacity to serve Aboriginal women in our community. The focus of this initiative was for Aboriginal women (16+ years) who have experienced intimate partner abuse and who may also be experiencing mental health issues, addictions, and various degrees of homelessness.

The Aboriginal Women's Initiative aimed to increase the cultural capacity of agencies serving Aboriginal women, to increase the confidence and knowledge of frontline service providers, and create an Aboriginal Women's Advisory Circle to oversee the work of the project and ensure that the work that was done in the community was

culturally appropriate. The overall goals of the initiative were to increase the capacity of the community in order to offer culturally secure services for Aboriginal women in a holistic manner through:

1. **Community consultations** with agencies and focus groups with past shelter residents;
2. **Cross training** among the violence against women, mental health/addictions, homelessness and Aboriginal service provider sectors;
3. Implementation of a **pilot women's wellness programming series**.

### *Community Consultations*

In September 2010, Shkagamik Kwe Health Centre held a community consultation session for social service agencies to assess mainstream services for all Aboriginal peoples within the city of Greater Sudbury. In a partnership between the YWCA Sudbury and Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre the Community Mobilization Strategy was offered in October 2010. This mobilization strategy was held to identify Aboriginal women specific needs and gaps in service delivery from the agency perspective. Twenty-four agencies (Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal) were in

attendance.

In order to capture other agencies that were unable to meet on that particular day, an information circle was held in November 2010. This circle's purpose was to share the proposed community plan of action with the community and request their feedback. Another purpose for the community information circle was to include the N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre in the evaluation section of this initiative. This was also a great opportunity to extend the invitation to community members.

The outcome of the consultations was the development of a community plan of action that extended goals for the community beyond the duration of the project for the community's own leverage of research and self-assessment for further capacity development (sustainability). The results are summarized in the following three areas:

#### Staff Level

##### Intersectoral Cross Training

- Culturally friendly atmosphere
- Cultural approaches
- Education of Aboriginal history
- Keeping collaborations good with each other
- Share calendar programming, newsletter

#### Service Coordination

##### Advisory Circle

- Focus on community mapping of services
- As a circle, takeover any major responsibilities of the Project Director
- Segue into the Aboriginal Women's Service Network
- Every six months attend a community gathering
- Meet once a month to see how everything is working out, what works, what doesn't
- Develop Volunteer Committee Members from each agency
- Quarterly meetings with all agencies
- Referral services to each agency
- Women's Shelter to address:
  - \*Homelessness
  - \*Addictions
  - \*Domestic violence
  - \*16+ youth
- Healing lodge room or space that all agencies can access to gather with clients and their families (circles)
- Measuring progress in community
- Research

#### Community

##### Social Media

- Use of Aboriginal Women's Service Directory
- Women's Wellness Journey Programming
- Our Sisters' Voices (Support circle)
- Publication of success stories

##### Focus Groups

Focus groups were held in September 2010 to identify the needs and gaps in service delivery for Aboriginal women from the

shelter residents' perspective. Three agencies assisted with the recruitment of the Aboriginal women within their respective agencies. The focus was on solutions for the needs and gaps in service delivery for Aboriginal women.

The results show that approximately 54% of the women believe they are not treated well because they were Anishinaabe, Cree or Métis. 31% believe it is because they are poor and the other 10% were unsure of the reason they were not treated well and 5% felt it was because they just showed up and the workers were busy.

Using the focus groups' results, the three main areas that needed improvement were 1) the workers' approaches, 2) lack of cultural sensitivity, and 3) not allowing the voices of the Aboriginal women to be heard. According to the results, some of the mainstream social service agency workers are not seen as helpers to these women; they put up more barriers. Comments include: "talked down to me... it's like talking to a brick wall ... bids are higher if you are Aboriginal."

Comparatively, the results show that although the staff's comprehension of the

distinct cultures and traditions of these women of lived experience are important; 92% of the women answered that a friendly and knowledgeable agency worker has also contributed to a positive experience for these women who access mainstream social service delivery systems.

As part of the same discussion, the participants were asked to share their positive experience with the other focus group participants. Using the focus groups' discussion, main areas that were seen as positive were inner power, workers' approaches, information, and culture. Comments included: "[worker] has a heart ... trust your intuition ... lots of information available." The comments regarding culture came from discussions around the utilization of Aboriginal organizations where they had positive experiences. Comments include: "wisdom and cultural practices are recognized ... Aboriginal agencies helped me get my culture back."

On a larger scale, the participants believe part of the solution is the type of service provision that they believe should be offered. They offered solutions such as connected programs and internal referral,

resource and information sharing. Solutions were also offered on another level where advocacy for Aboriginal women, by Aboriginal women was seen as important.

These Aboriginal women's experiences and solutions can be used to bring about awareness, and plausible suggestions for cross training opportunities for frontline workers in the city of Greater Sudbury. After all, they are the consumers of these services and are the ones who hold the information to bring about positive change to the social service delivery system.

### Intersectoral Cross Training

The intersectoral cross training modules include four sectors, which are: violence against women; mental health; addictions; and homelessness. These modules were utilized as part of the Ontario Woman Abuse Screening Project, whose goal includes increasing frontline and agency staff's ability, competence, comfort level, and to demonstrate a commitment to cultural inclusion. The focus was on the increased strategic engagement of partners and improved coordination and delivery of service. Through this intersectoral cross training, the capacity of frontline workers

increased through training and education resulting in a greater understanding of Aboriginal issues and provision of culturally secure services.

### Advisory Circle

The Advisory Circle is an interagency committee on women's wellness, mental health and homelessness. The purpose of this Circle is to oversee and make culturally secure recommendations to the Project Director on the three overall goals of project. The Circle also assisted in the creation of the cross training by using their expertise and also utilizing the skills available through their agencies.

### Women's Wellness Journey

In order to address the specific needs of Aboriginal women who are homeless and experiencing other challenges, such as mental health issues and addictions, a **women's wellness journey** was created. Using the seven Grandfather teachings, the women went through a journey from truth to wisdom in seven weeks ending January 2011. In the spirit of collaboration, we utilized service providers and resources already available to provide expertise for

the series of women's wellness programming.

Each week there were two facilitators, one from the YWCA Sudbury and one from the urban Aboriginal community. This increased the knowledge of the YWCA Sudbury staff in regards to Aboriginal culture and traditions and increased the Aboriginal communities knowledge of the services offered at YWCA Sudbury.

#### Future Direction

The concept of creating new community infrastructures such as a Healing Lodge and an Aboriginal Women's Shelter speaks to the vision of the Aboriginal community in Sudbury. It speaks of longevity and future goals for the Aboriginal community. The interest and mobilization of the community for and with Aboriginal women in the City of Greater Sudbury is visible through the momentum of agencies wanting to work together, offer cross training, facilitate women's wellness programming, and thinking well into the future for all Aboriginal people in the City of Greater Sudbury.



The Women's Wellness Programming series is based on results from the Literature Review, the Northern Extension Project, Advisory Circle input, Focus Groups from Aboriginal women in the city of Greater Sudbury, and also the community consultations which included several different social service agencies, also in the city of Greater Sudbury.

The seven series framework is based on the seven Grandfather teachings which is representative of this region.

#### Workshop #1 Truth

"Truth is to know all of these things."

Topics: Education on Aboriginal History (101), Ethnostress, How Aboriginal people got to be where they are, truth about violence against women

### Workshop #2 Respect

“To honour all of Creation is to have respect.”

Topics: Healing, Healthy Lifestyles, spiritual and cultural connection (on the land activities), traditional crafts with teachings, family oriented healing

### Workshop #3 Honesty

“Honesty in facing a situation is to be brave.”

Topics: finding your personal and cultural identity, building your spirit, traditional activities (meditation, sweats, ceremonies)

### Workshop #4 Love

“To know love is to know peace.”

Topics: love yourself (self care), love your family (healthy relationships, parenting), love your community (information on the social service delivery system), healthy sexuality, widening the family system to include “extended” family

### Workshop #5 Humility

“Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation.”

Topics: traditional roles of men and women, navigation of the social service delivery system, education system, child care system

### Workshop #6 Bravery

“Bravery is to face the foe with integrity.”

Topics: gaining decision-making power over your own life, how to access services in the community in a productive way (education, housing, mental/physical health, income support, personal safety and justice), what to do or what you need to know if you decide to leave the relationship, addressing racism, breaking stereotypes, safety planning

### Workshop #7 Wisdom

“To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom.”

Topics: creating social support networks, giving back (peer support, mentors), volunteering, have volunteer women who have been through it all to couple with agency workers to support the client, aboriginal women creating a training piece on how to best approach and work with Aboriginal women, possible publications of success stories



From *The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway* by E. Benton-Banai (Red School-House, Saint-Paul, Minn. 1988)

The Creator gave the seven Grandfathers, who were very powerful spirits, the responsibility to watch over the people. The Grandfathers saw that the people were living a hard life. They sent their helper six different times to find a person who could be taught how to live in a good way with all of creation. Finally the seven Grandfathers' helper found a baby boy, who because he was just born was pure enough to receive the teachings and bring these teachings back to the people.

The Grandfathers were happy with the choice made by the helper. The baby boy is a symbol to people that it is important to start early when educating our young

people and that they are already beginning to learn at a very young age. Babies are still very connected to the spirit world and understand this connection, which can be lost when people become adults.

While the boy was travelling with the helper they were visited seven times by spirits who told them about the gifts. Here is what they said:

To cherish knowledge is to know **wisdom**;

To know **love** is to know peace;

To honour all of Creation is to have **respect**;

**Bravery** is to face the foe with integrity;

**Honesty** in facing a situation is to be brave;

**Humility** is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation;

**Truth** is to know all of these things.

The young boy was then put in the care of Otter who was to return the boy to his people to teach them what he had learned. The boy, because of all the time spent in the spirit world, was now an old man.

The Old Man gathered all the people around and told them of his journey to the seven Grandfather's lodge. He explained

how to use the gifts. He explained that the opposite of any of the gifts would bring a negative result of that gift. It was now up to the people to try to follow the path of a good and healthy life using the seven Grandfather's teachings.



Before you begin on this journey, you will need to be prepared. What do you need to get started?

Most importantly, the interest needs to be there. If there is no interest from Aboriginal women in the community, then you will have no participation. You can measure the interest from the amount of women who register and the agencies that are onboard with assisting you. It is up to you to decide what number of women you are comfortable with before going ahead

with the Women's Wellness Journey.

A usual group will have between six to ten participants. This encourages diverse conversation and opinions.

### Supplies

The supplies that are needed for the Women's Wellness Journey are:

#### Rock Painting

- assorted rocks
- toothpicks
- glue guns
- spray on lacquer
- small add-ons. i.e. rhinestones
- acrylic paint, assorted colours

#### Mini-Grandmother Bags

- deerhide (softer and easier to work with)
- leather hole punch
- butcher paper for pattern making
- pens
- thick felt
- beading needles & thread, beads
- leather needles

#### Miscellaneous

- Portable storage container
- Lock
- Journals
- Photocopies of material from facilitators
- Snacks

## Location

The Women's Wellness Journey will need a quiet, private room within an agency/hall to host the seven sessions. The room should be away from high-traffic areas so there are no distractions or noise to interrupt the journey. The following are suggestions on community agencies to host the Women's Wellness Journey, but you are not limited to them.

- Your Agency
- YWCA Sudbury
- N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre
- Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre
- Aboriginal Peoples Alliance of Northern Ontario
- Better Beginnings, Better Futures
- Sudbury Action Centre for Youth

To get in touch with the agency that you wish to host your Women's Wellness Journey, please call and book an appointment with the program manager, executive director, or program worker. When you attend the meeting, be prepared with a draft poster and information regarding the journey. It will help the agency in making a decision if the journey you are interested in coordinating is the right choice for them.

## Session Facilitators

When looking for facilitators, you will need to link up the teaching with the expertise of an individual. There are two facilitators per session, both knowledgeable in their own area. Here are a list of the agencies that have been utilized in the past.

### Laurentian University

- Aboriginal history
- Ethnostress
- Traditional healing methods

### YWCA Sudbury

- Safety planning
- Self care
- Meditation
- Navigating the system

### Sudbury District Health Unit

- "Let's Talk About It" Violence
- Nutrition

### N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre

- Traditional roles of men and women

### Sudbury Catholic District School Board

- Decision making
- Addressing racism

Community Elder

- Finding your cultural identity
- Traditional activities

In the Resource section of this booklet, you will find the contact information for the individuals who have been facilitators before. Please feel free to call and ask for their availability. You are not limited to the community agencies that have been mentioned in this booklet. If you have other facilitators in mind, please do so. It will build the resource list for available facilitators.

In order to keep the Women's Wellness Journey open to interpretation and have flexibility within the journey, there are more than a few topics you can choose from for each session. Please refer to page 6 & 7 for the topics that fall under each teaching. Choose two topics and find suitable facilitators for each.

### *Example*

Workshop #6 Bravery

“Bravery is to face the foe with integrity.”

Topics: gaining decision making power over your own life, how to access services in the community in a productive way, what to do or what you need to know if you

decide to leave the relationship, addressing racism, breaking stereotypes, safety planning.

### **Step 1-Choose two topics**

1. Safety planning
2. Addressing racism

### **Step 2-Look for Facilitators**

YWCA Sudbury

- Safety Planning

Sudbury Catholic District School Board

- Addressing Racism

### **Step 3-Look in Resource Section**

- Find names of facilitators
- Contact the facilitators and ask if they are available on the date of Workshop # 6

### Troubleshooting

If they are unavailable, you will need to access other community agencies in order to find a suitable facilitator. This is a great opportunity for you to present if you are comfortable in one or a few of the topics.

### Delivery

The Women's Wellness Journey has been set up as a seven week journey. It is offered from 1:00—4:00 pm on the same day of each week. If you wish to change the delivery, please feel free to do so.

Examples:

- Weekend Retreat
- Two day conference
- Evening groups
- Morning groups
- Afternoon groups

### Child Care

Many women have children in school or at home with them. If you are hosting the journey during school hours, please remember school lets out at 2:30-3:00 and many mothers will need to be home in time for them. Please plan your journey accordingly.

Options

- On site daycare
- Provide money to reimburse babysitters

### Transportation

You will need to decide if you are responsible for the transportation of the women to and from the program.

Options:

- Bus tickets
- Personal vehicle pick-up (make sure your insurance company covers this)
- Taxi cabs

Some of the women will have their own vehicle also, so this may not be for everyone that participates in the journey. The mode of transportation is up to you and of course, your budget.

### Food

Depending on the length of the Women's Wellness Journey, you have the option of providing a snack or a meal. If the wellness journey is throughout the day, two snacks (mid-morning & afternoon) and a lunch is recommended. If it is held weekly for a few hours then a snack will suffice.

Take advantage of any food fundraisers that are taking place on the same day as your wellness journey, i.e. Indian Taco sales at Friendship Centre, BBQs at Sudbury Action Centre for Youth, etc.

This not only feeds your participants, it leaves you with less preparation time and also helps out local community agencies.

Now that you have your time and location picked out, facilitators booked, and food plan ready it is time for the most important part: recruiting Aboriginal women to participate!

### Advertising

When advertising your Women's Wellness Journey with a poster, please remember the 5Ws.

1. **What** is it?
2. **When** is it?
3. **Where** is it?
4. **Who** is coordinating the journey?
5. **Why** is there a journey?

These questions need to be answered on the poster you will be creating. Posters or flyers are an easy way to advertise your wellness journey. Many community agencies and public spaces will allow you to put your poster up to advertise for free. Please include on the poster if there is transportation, child care and food provided.

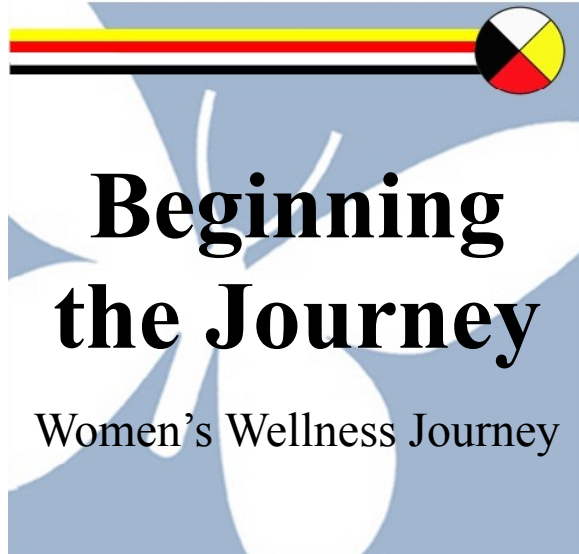
### Dissemination of Information

Now that you have your posters printed and you are ready to post them up at community agencies, take a moment to think of where they will be noticed by Aboriginal women. Some ideas are:

- Daycares
- Aboriginal organizations
- Hospitals
- Schools  
(Elementary to Post-secondary)
- Malls
- Bus depot
- Coffee shops
- Newspapers
- Community events TV channel

### Other Avenues of Dissemination

In order to ensure coverage of your wellness journey and to recruit Aboriginal women you may consider e-mail. Sending out an e-mail to all of your relevant community contacts with the poster attached and asking them to forward to other community contacts can spread news about the wellness journey fairly quick Please check with your agency's policy regarding social media tools before using them, i.e. Facebook, Twitter.



You have your participants registered and now it is time to prepare for the first session of the wellness journey. How exciting!

### Setting the Stage

You want your room to be inviting and comfortable for the participants to enjoy themselves and to return. Please ensure that you also have tissues on hand and water for the participants. This is also where you can incorporate some culturally safe techniques, such as:

- Arrange chairs in a circle with an opening in the East
- Have a smudge bowl and the four sacred medicines in the middle of the circle, with matches
- In this territory, when talking in the circle always start on your right

### Welcoming Your Participants

When your participants arrive, please have them sign in and sit in the circle. When everyone has arrived, you can then begin your smudge and prayer.

If you are not comfortable with doing the smudge and prayer, you can ask an Elder or traditional resource person to perform the smudge and prayer for you. This is when you can be learning from the Elder or traditional person also. In time, you will be able to do the smudge and prayer by yourself. Another option is to ask one of the participants in your group. You can find the contact information of traditional resource people in the Resource section of this manual.

### Circling In

What usually happens when you circle in, the attention of the group is on everyone sitting within the circle (including the facilitators and yourself). You can begin by welcoming everyone to the wellness journey, summarizing the purpose; then introduce yourself, where you are from- what you hope to get out of the journey. You will be learning along with them!

In this territory, the speakers in the circle are always to the right. It is informally referred to as “Ojibwe Way”. In other nations, the circle always goes to the left, i.e. Haudenosaunee. There is no one right way or wrong way, as long as there is respect shown for the other.

After every person is finished introducing themselves, where they are from and why they chose to come, there is always the option for a participant to pass in the circle and not say anything. Do not pressure the participant to say anything; just give them the option to pass. They will provide the group with their information when they are ready to.

It is advised for the speaker to be holding an Eagle feather, rock or other sacred object so it is visually known whose turn it is to speak. Never interrupt a person when they are speaking. It is their time to share with the group. When the speaker is done, she passes the object to the right of her to the next participant. When the object makes its way back to you, place it in the middle of the circle with your smudge bowl and medicines. Now is the time to set some ground rules with the participants in order to ensure each person feels safe.

### Utilizing the Circle in a ‘Good Way’

After circling in, this is an opportune time to talk about the circle and what it means. The circle is a safe place to discuss the topics on hand or anything that any participant feels the need to. It is important to tell the participants what is talked about in the circle, stays in the circle except in cases where you have harmed someone, are harming someone or have in the past (not in cases that have been dealt with through the court or using restorative justice). Explain that is the only time you have a duty to report to the authorities. Also remind them of the object used when speaking and to have respect for each other to ensure the circle is safe for everyone.



### What Facilitators Want to Know

What audience am I presenting to?  
How many participants?  
How much time do I have?  
What is the layout of the room?  
What type of AV equipment do you have available?  
Will you be able to photocopy my handouts for me?

### Presentations

The length of the facilitators' presentations are up to you. Interactive presentations with a lot of dialogue will be more interesting than a lecture style presentation. In the past, facilitators had 40-45 minutes for their presentations with a break in between them.

### Honouring the Facilitators

Depending on your budget, you may be able to provide a gift for the facilitators. If not, a heartfelt thank-you card will do. Most facilitators do community presentations as part of their job. When working with Elders/Grandmothers and traditional resource people, an honorarium is appreciated and a sign of deep respect.

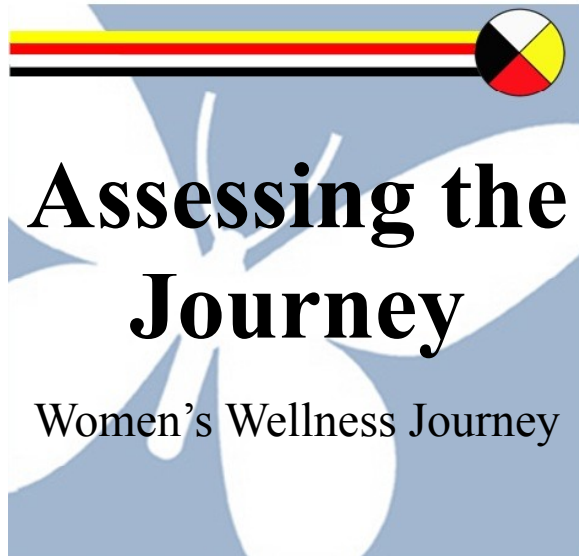
### Craft Time

Following the presentations, the participants are able to paint a rock for each session. Each Grandfather teaching will be painted on the rock and then the women can then personalize it with designs or add ons, i.e. mini stones. Another craft that is part of this journey is the mini-Grandmother bags (leather pouches) to carry their stones in after completing the journey. This is when the women also have the option of beading a design to sew onto their mini-Grandmother bag.



### Circling Out

This seven week journey is made for Aboriginal women, by Aboriginal women. Each session will be set up in the same manner: Smudge & prayer, circle in, presentations with breaks, craft time, and circle out. The reason for circling out is to be able to discuss the happenings of the group, what they learned and also ensures group closure.



Evaluation of your wellness journey can be done in different ways. You can have them fill out pre- and post-evaluation forms over the duration of the journey, fill out evaluation forms after each session, or set up a survey on Survey Monkey, which is a free online survey software & evaluation tool, [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com).

### Pre-Evaluation

Using a Likert scale (1-5) is an easy way for the women to answer the questions. For example, you can ask the women:

On a scale of 1-5, what would you rate your knowledge of Aboriginal History?

The women can then circle the number that coincides with their knowledge. There would be a number of different questions

that you can ask in a pre-evaluation questionnaire. Use your facilitators' presentation topics as the areas that the women will use the Likert scale to gauge their knowledge.

### Likert Scale

1-I have no knowledge

2-I have some knowledge

3-I know about the topic

4-I can share my knowledge comfortably with others, but haven't as of yet

5-I am able to share my knowledge comfortably with others and have done so in the past

### Post-Evaluation

Using the same questionnaire as before, have them fill out and circle the number that coincides with their knowledge. You can use this as a measurement by tallying the pre-evaluation results and comparing them to the post-evaluation results. A small modification can be added to the end of the post-evaluation forms to ask qualitative questions, i.e. What did you learn from this wellness journey? What will you take away from this wellness journey and apply to your daily life? What needs improvement?

### Evaluation by Session

After each session, have the participants fill out a questionnaire asking their opinion on the journey so far. The positive aspect of this type of evaluation is there are immediate results. You can either remedy something that is not going well or feel secure in knowing that the journey is moving along smoothly.

### *Example*

Did you enjoy the group today?

Yes    No opinion    No

What was the part that you enjoyed the most?

Presentations

Circle

Craft time

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What needs improvement?

Presentations

Circle

Craft Time

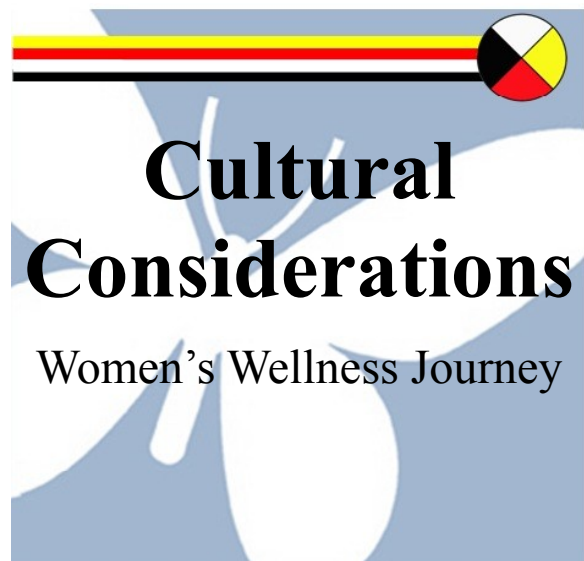
Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide suggestions for future presentations or areas that need improvement.

### Online Survey Tools

Using the internet has its positive aspects, such as ease of use, can complete it when it is convenient for the women, and the ability to tally the results immediately.

Strong consideration should be given to the amount of access each participant has to a computer with internet. This should be factored into your decision if using an online survey tool.



As mentioned previously in this manual, this wellness journey which is based on the seven Grandfather teachings, are traditions of this territory. This journey should be modified to fit each territories traditions and beliefs. If you are unsure of which territory you are in and which traditions and beliefs to modify into this journey,

there are people within your own community that can assist you. Think of the Aboriginal organizations that offer programming in your area. This would be a suitable time to reach out to other agencies and partner with them, if possible.

When creating, delivering and evaluating the Women's Wellness Journey there will be a cultural difference from a mainstream workshop.

1. Elders are an important part of the circle.
2. Smudge and prayer starts the workshop.
3. Closing prayer ends the workshop.
4. Use of a traditional talking circle format is recommended.
5. Some Aboriginal people prefer informality, rather than a rigid, structured workshop.
6. Some Aboriginal people, when pressured to give an answer, may start to agree with the facilitator or stop offering information.
7. Some Aboriginal people may need to build a sense of rapport and trust before becoming immersed in the workshops. Time should be factored in for this.
8. Some Aboriginal people prefer to use

family support systems, rather than social service support systems. Both are equal and one should not be judged to be better.

9. Silence is important and needs to be respected.
10. Family oriented recreation, activities are important.
11. Some Aboriginal people are very in tune with their spiritual side.
12. It is also important to acknowledge that when working with Aboriginal women, they are at various levels in terms of assimilation.
13. Some Aboriginal people's healing includes the family and is very holistic.

These differences are very important to consider when working with Aboriginal women. It is recommended to include some of the culturally rich traditions when creating and preparing workshops when working within your territory.



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**About YWCA Canada:**

YWCA Canada is the country's oldest largest women's multi-service organization, with 34 Member Associations operating in nine provinces and two territories. YWCA is the largest national provider of shelter to women, serving 25,000 women, children and teen girls including 6,000 fleeing domestic violence each year. We are the largest provider of literacy, life skills, employment and counselling programs in the country, and the second largest provider of childcare services. YWCA Canada is a member association of the World YWCA which unites 25 million women and girls worldwide and spans 125 countries.

