



ELDER, KNOWLEDGE KEEPER, SENATOR PROTOCOL GUIDE



Sweat Lodge Teachings, Thunder Bay Campus

Preamble

This guide is not intended to replace the important cultural tradition of building relationships. Those interested in learning are advised to meet in-person to receive teachings. While this guide may provide a basic understanding of protocols when working with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Métis Senators at Lakehead University, it is not intended to replace personal relations that reflect our connectivity.

Introduction

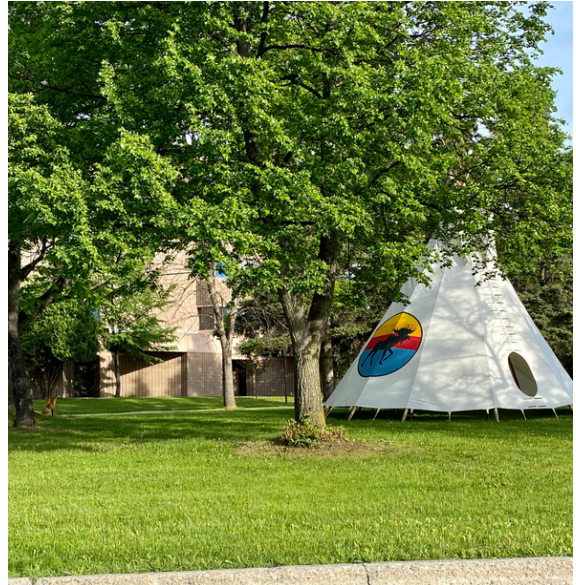
Lakehead University is committed to continuing to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls for Action and Universities Canada Principles on Indigenous Education, recognizing that education is key to reconciliation and to the creation of a culture of understanding and appreciation through the University that will support a more equitable future for Indigenous people. Lakehead University appreciates that its response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls for Action must also focus on building understanding and appreciation among all students, staff, and faculty. As Lakehead continues to focus on an open and constructive dialogue among cultures and to enhance shared knowledge, Lakehead University recognizes the wisdom of Elders and Indigenous community partners to help inform decision making, research initiatives, academic programs, cultural spaces on campus and support for students.



Elder Beatrice Twance-Hynes, Fall Harvest 2018

Land Acknowledgement

Lakehead University respectfully acknowledges its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples. Lakehead Thunder Bay is located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the [Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850](#). Lakehead Orillia is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg include the [Ojibwe](#), [Odawa](#), and [Potawatomi Nations](#), collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. Lakehead University acknowledges the history that many nations hold in the areas around our campuses, and is committed to a relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.



Tipi, Thunder Bay Campus

Purpose

This guide is intended to provide a basic understanding of protocols when working with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Métis Senators at Lakehead University, in order to promote respectful relations with members of Indigenous communities.

Indigenous Initiatives is responsible for providing assistance to those who wish to obtain the guidance of an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or Métis Senator at Lakehead University. For more information on how best to facilitate and establish relationships or if you have any questions about the protocol process, please contact:

- Thunder Bay - Indigenous Student Services Centre
Administrative Assistant
Email: adm.issc@lakeheadu.ca
Room: UC1007
- Orillia - Office of Indigenous Initiatives
Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator
Email: orillia.ii@lakeheadu.ca
Room: OR1019



Traditional medicines

Who are First Nation Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Métis Senators?



Elder Gene Nowegejick, Fall Harvest 2018

Elders and Knowledge Keepers play an important role within the Indigenous community. They are respected for the knowledge they hold and it is believed that they live a good life; *mino-bimaadiziwin*. It is their accepted responsibility to know and share traditional language, knowledge, culture, and history; and to pass on these teachings to others. These roles are not defined by age and are not gender-specific, but rather are based on their level of knowledge and cultural wisdom. Métis Elders are often referred to as Senators within Métis communities. They too are respected for the knowledge they carry and share on Métis culture, language, history, and traditions.

Protocol - Tobacco Offering

In most Indigenous communities, it is a common cultural protocol to offer tobacco when making a request of an Elder or Knowledge Keeper. Keep in mind that not every individual practices this cultural protocol and so it is important to ask first. Tobacco is one of the four sacred medicines and it is used in both everyday life and in all ceremonies. A tobacco offering can be made by making a tobacco tie; tobacco wrapped in cloth and tied with a ribbon or by offering a pouch of tobacco. Traditional or organic tobacco is preferred but generally any tobacco is acceptable. The tobacco is offered when you make your initial request of the Elder or Knowledge Keeper and if this isn't possible, as soon as the Elder arrives. Here are aspects you can include when offering the tobacco to an Elder or Knowledge Keeper:

- Introduce yourself (i.e., name, heritage, place of origin, treaty land, professional role, etc.)
- Ask the request (i.e., I am offering this tobacco for the opening prayer at our event; the teachings that you will share; the smudging ceremony; the drum song, etc.)

In addition, tobacco can also be used to thank someone, to show gratitude, acknowledgment, show appreciation and respect towards someone.



Tobacco ties

Honorariums & Gift Offering



Birch Bark Baskets

First Nation Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Métis Senators are paid honorariums when supporting Lakehead University requests. This aspect, along with a tobacco offering and gift offering, honours both the Indigenous cultural customs and Canadian protocols of reciprocity.

For current Elder honorarium rates, please contact:

- Thunder Bay - Indigenous Student Services Centre
Indigenous Student Services Centre Coordinator
Email: coordinator.issc@lakeheadu.ca
Room: UC1007
- Orillia - Office of Indigenous Initiatives
Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator
Email: orillia.ii@lakheadu.ca
Room: OR1019

How to Make a Tobacco Tie

Materials: Traditional tobacco; cotton fabric; string, cotton yarn, or ribbon; scissors

Step 1: How to make a tobacco tie starts with why you are making a tobacco tie. This is the beginning stage of your request and you focus on your intentions of why you are making a tobacco tie. If you do not have an intention when making the tobacco tie, you would carry the tobacco tie with you or keep it in a dry safe space (paper bag or wooden box) until your intention comes to you.

Step 2: Cut cotton fabric into a square.. Each colour of fabric represents something depending on the nation.

Step 3: Gather a large pinch of tobacco using your left hand, while thinking about the intention for making the tobacco tie.

Step 4: Place tobacco in the center of the fabric.



Step 5: Fold the square into thirds.

Step 6: Fold the fabric in half.

Step 7: Tie the fabric together with the cotton string, yarn, or ribbon but do not make a tight knot.



Community Resources

Approaching a Traditional Healer, Elder, or Medicine Person

<https://mushkiki.com/our-programs/approaching-a-traditional-healer-elder-or-medicine-person/>

Approaching a Traditional Healer, Elder, or Medicine Person

<https://aht.ca/traditional-teachings-new/approaching-a-traditional-healer-elder-or-medicine-person/>

The Four Sacred Medicines

<https://aht.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/FourSacredMedicines.pdf>

Making Tobacco Ties

<http://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-and-the-first-nations-health-authority/wellness-streams/respecting-tobacco>

Related Policy & Institutional Resources:

Lakehead University Elders Council

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous/indigenous-services-tb/cultural-services/elders-council>

Lakehead University Cultural Ceremonies Policy

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous/indigenous-services-tb/cultural-services/cultural-protocol>

Lakehead University Sweat Lodge Site & Garden (Thunder Bay)

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous/indigenous-services-tb/cultural-services/sweat-lodge>