

Walking with our Sisters

Volunteer Training

&

Culture 101

Sacred Items and Bundles

Anishinawbe Health Toronto

Sacred items vary for each individual, they are items the individual holds dear and respects. These items are carried within their personal bundles, they are also items the individual recognizes as having a Spirit. Each region has its own teachings and practices, it is important to recognize and respect the teachings of the region and the individual. It is also important to always ask before handling someone's sacred bundle and items.

Don't be shy to ask what an item is, that is the best learning for the individual and yourself.

Pipe

The pipe is gifted to an individual, of Aboriginal descent, as a way of communicating with Creator; a direct link is formed. When the pipe is smoked or touched, people are putting their thoughts and prayers into it.

Pipes are referred to as Grandmother, if carried by a woman; and Grandfather, if carried by a man. Only natural tobacco is more commonly smoked in pipes, as natural tobacco has no harsh chemicals.

Eagle Feather(s)

The Eagle, particularly in this region, is a Spiritual leader, guider and protector. Individuals carrying eagle feathers have earned these items as part of their sacred bundles and use them within their ceremony and practice; they are also highly respected and taken care of diligently.

There are different “protocols” in handling an eagle feather, each eagle feather carrier should be asked *before* anyone handles their feather.

Drum

The drum is the heartbeat of our people; it’s the heartbeat of life. We live the first nine months of our lives within our mothers and we listen to the heartbeat; it sets the pattern of existence.

Each individual carries different teachings about their drum, we must respect and recognize those teachings and uplift them when we can. It is best practice to ask *before* handling someone’s drum, drumstick, even their drum bag.

Shaker

The shaker was the first sound made by Creator, it is the sound of Creators voice. When a shaker is used in ceremony, it represents the first sound that was heard in the universe.

Shakers are made from various types of material, but each shaker is sacred to the individual.

Sacred Bundles

Sacred Bundles are items that help individuals and guide them in the work they are called upon to do. There can be one item or many items, each item is sacred and has a Spirit. Each individual carries their own teachings, so you may hear different teachings about the same item(s) but in a different way. Either way is correct, but you follow the way the individual has been taught.

The Four Sacred Medicines
Anishinawbe Health Toronto

Tobacco is the first plant that the Creator gave to Anishinabe people. It is the main activator of all the plant spirits. Three other medicines, sage, cedar and sweetgrass follow tobacco, and together they are referred to as the four sacred medicines.

The four sacred medicines are used in everyday life and in ceremonies. All of them can be used to smudge with, though sage, cedar and sweetgrass also have many other uses. On the Medicine Wheel, tobacco sits in the East, sweetgrass in the South, sage in the West and cedar in the North.

Tobacco

Tobacco, or semaa, was given to Anishinabe as a way to communicate with all of Creation, and to the Spirit. When an offering of tobacco is made, we are putting all of our thoughts, feelings and prayers into the tobacco. Tobacco is also offered as giving thanks, for instance, when picking medicines, plants or food, we offer tobacco and give thanks for that Spirit and explain why we are using that particular item.

When seeking advice or guidance, we offer tobacco to the Traditional counsellor/guide/teacher. We also use tobacco to help us speak and find the words we need to share. We put our belief in tobacco and ask for the guidance we are seeking.

Sweetgrass

Sweetgrass was traditionally used in this region, because it is what the Creator gave to us. Over time, sage was shared amongst are people and is now widely used because it is universal for men and women to use. Sweetgrass is the man’s medicine, it also known as Mother Earth’s hair and is a purification smudge used to cleanse.

It is also the braid of Sharing, Honesty, Truth and Strength. These cannot exist without the other.

Sage

Sage is used to prepare people for ceremonies and teachings, as well as for cleansing the spirit, heart, body and mind. It is a purification smudge used to cleanse the individual of anything that might be troubling them.

Sage is also recognized as women’s medicine and widely used in circles, teachings, meetings, etc., because the women are included in the smudging ceremony.

Cedar

Cedar is recognized as a purification medicine and is used in ceremony, the home, office, etc. It is also used in ceremony to send help send up the words to Creator and amongst Spirit. It is also known as a protection and healing medicine when used in ceremony, sweat lodge and fasting.

Taking Care of the Medicines

It is important to recognize the sacredness of these medicines, and items, and each should be treated with respect, kindness, love and caring. It is also important to recognize that each medicine has a Spirit, and should be treated with respect; if you have been using alcohol and/or drugs these items should not be handled because of the healing work they do.

Sunrise Ceremony

A Sunrise Ceremony is a ceremony welcoming the day to come and all the day has to offer. The ceremony is started before the sun rises in the East, and certain prayers are said and songs are shared that welcome the Grandfather Sun. Sunrise ceremonies are also conducted to welcome/open various meetings, workshops, etc., to bring Spirit to the gathering and to thank all of Creation for looking that way.

This ceremony is also conducted in various ways, the individual conducting the ceremony will provide direction and explanation to the participants.

Skirts

Women, in Anishinabe teachings, wear skirts to signify their role within their family, community and nation. It also signifies women's purpose in life and the solid foundation women have.

Again, each teaching varies by the region. The skirt worn by women is usually individual in colour and pattern, but some regions also have certain styles that represent them.

Removing of shoes

Vamps

“Vamps” are also known as “moccasin tops”. For this installation, they represent the murdered and missing women’s unfinished lives.

Each *vamp* is represented by their maker and is significant to that individual. We cannot share that individual’s story, we can only absorb the beauty/hurt of their story.

Your Role as a Helper

Firstly, this role plays an important part of this project. You are not only sitting with the exhibit, you are also holding the space for individuals that visit. Visitors to the space will have mixed emotions, there will be emotions of hurt, sorrow and pain, and there will be emotions of joy, happiness and pleasure. It is our responsibility to create a safe environment for our visitors. We must not judge visitors, we must respect all walks of life come to this exhibit. We must also be humble and have humility to ask when we do not know the answer.

Smudging

There are different medicines used to smudge, we offer use sage and sweetgrass to cleanse and purify.

Smudging is a cleansing ceremony, important parts to pay attention to are: eyes to see clearly, ears to listen with openness, mouth to speak with honesty and truth, hearts to feel and our Spirits to listen with open minds. People may also need to smudge afterwards to cleanse themselves further.

Installation days beginning January 7 – 9

These days will be fairly long, 10 – 12 hours per day. We love the support we have been getting from everyone willing to help with installation, but we don't want to exhaust our volunteers. We are asking to volunteer what time you can. We will need at 10 people for the installation.

Tuesday 10am start

Wednesday 10am start

Thursday 10am start

Exhibit times and days beginning January 10 - 26

Monday & Tuesday - Closed

Wednesday 11 – 4

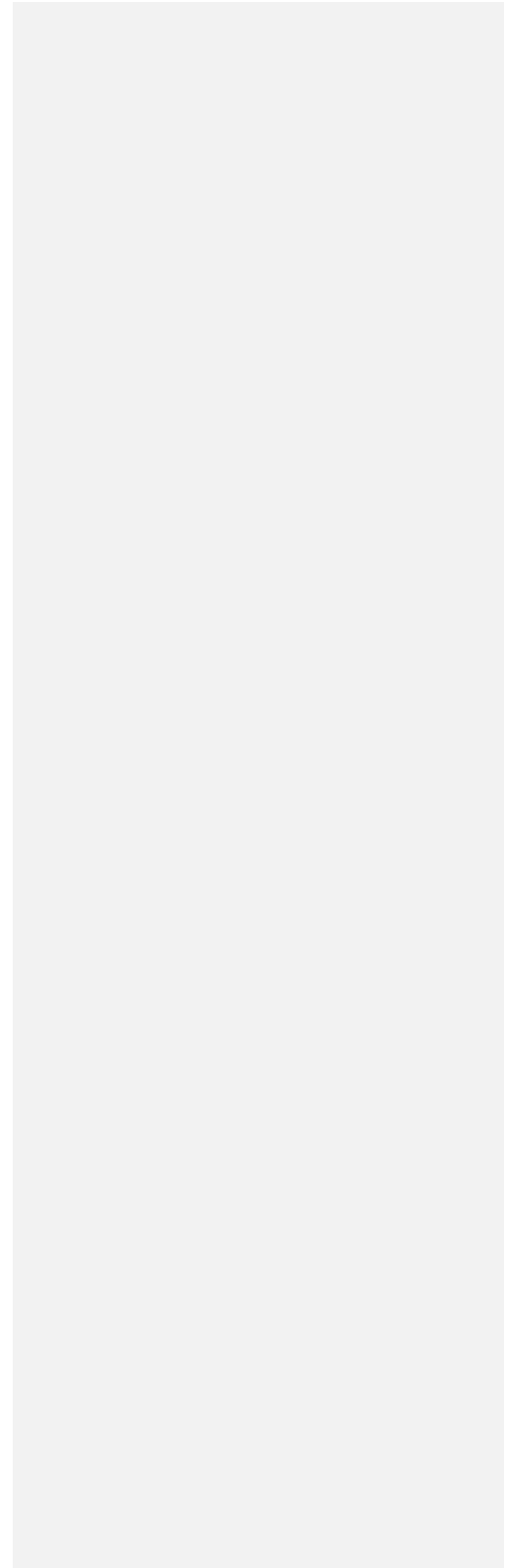
Thursday 1 – 7

Friday 11 – 4

Saturday 11 – 4

Sunday 11 – 4

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Anishinabe

Commented [m1]: REBECCA to fill in.

Smudging

Different medicines are used to smudge. Smudging is a cleansing practice. You might notice individuals pay attention to: eyes to see clearly, ears to listen with openness, mouth to speak with honesty and truth, hearts to feel. People may also need to smudge afterwards to cleanse themselves further. Think about smudging as a means to get ready for work or ceremony. We centre ourselves on the work to be done.

The Four Sacred Medicines

Tobacco is the first plant that the Creator gave to Anishinabe people. It is the main activator of all the plant spirits. Sage, cedar and sweetgrass follow tobacco, and together they are referred to as the four sacred medicines. The four sacred medicines are used in everyday life and in ceremonies. All of them can be used to smudge with, though sage, cedar and sweetgrass also have many other uses.

It is important to recognize the sacredness of these medicines. Each should be treated with respect, kindness, love and caring. It is also important to recognize that each medicine has a Spirit, and should be treated with respect.

Tobacco

Tobacco, or semaa, was given to Anishinabe as a way to communicate with all the Spirit and all of Creation. When an offering of tobacco is made, we are putting all of our thoughts, feelings and prayers into the tobacco. Tobacco is also offered as a way of giving thanks, for instance, when picking medicines, plants or food, we offer tobacco and give thanks for that Spirit and ask for permission to use that Spirit in a particular way before putting it to use or picking it.

When seeking advice or guidance, we offer tobacco along with our question. We also use tobacco to help us speak and find the words we need to share. We put our belief in tobacco and ask for the guidance we are seeking. Tobacco is not a symbol; it is a direct link to the spirit and between spirits. Offering tobacco is not only a symbolic gesture.

Cedar

Cedar is recognized as a purification medicine and is used in ceremony, the home, office, etc. It is also used in ceremony to send help send up the words to Creator and amongst Spirit. For example, there is always a bowl of cedar next to a bowl of tobacco at a sacred fire. Cedar is placed in the fire following the tobacco (prayers).

Commented [m2]: REBECCA: To add information about cleaning and gathering cedar, cedar under cloth, and cedar on walls/doorways.

Sage

Sage is used to prepare people for ceremonies and teachings, as well as for cleansing the spirit, heart, body and mind. It is a purification smudge used to cleanse the individual of anything that might be troubling them.

Sweetgrass

Sweetgrass grows in abundance in this area. It is sometimes referred to as Mother Earth's hair. Sweetgrass is often used to smudge and assist with kindness. It is also used to light the sacred pipe, smudge food at feasts, and water at water ceremonies.

Sacred Fire

Commented [m3]: Rebecca to fill in description.

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Sacred Bundles

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Pipe

The pipe is gifted to an individual, as a way of communicating with the Spirit.

When the pipe is smoked or touched, people are contributing their thoughts and prayers. Pipes are referred to as Grandmother, if carried by a woman; and Grandfather, if carried by a man. It is common for only natural tobacco to be smoke in pipes.

Eagle Feather(s)

The Eagle, particularly in this region, is a Spiritual leader, guider and protector. Individuals carrying eagle feathers have earned these items as part of their sacred bundles and use them within their ceremony and practice; they are also highly respected and taken care of diligently. There are different “protocols” in handling an eagle feather, each eagle feather carrier should be asked before anyone handles their feather.

Drum

The drum is the heartbeat of our people; it’s the heartbeat of life. We live the first nine months of our lives within our mothers and we listen to the heartbeat. It sets the pattern of existence. There are deep teachings and philosophies about the drum and life. Each individual carries different teachings about their drum and we must respect and recognize those teachings and uplift them when we can. It is best practice to ask *before* handling someone’s drum, drumstick, even their drum bag.

Shaker

The shaker is a sacred item with great meaning. It is understood as the first sound made by the creator. When a shaker is used in ceremony, it represents the first sound that was heard in the universe. Shakers are made from various types of material, but each shaker is sacred to the individual.

Ceremonies

Skirts

Women, in Anishinabe teachings, wear long skirts to honour their gifts and roles as Anishinabe quay. The skirt honours the direct connection between women and Mother Earth. There are many beautiful teachings about the skirt. All women are encouraged to wear skirts in ceremony (including install/de-installation) but it is not a requirement. Extra skirts will be on hand to borrow if needed.

Commented [m4]: Rebecca – I couldn’t quite make out your handwriting here. Not sure what the proper ending is on quay...

Moontime

Commented [m5]: Rebecca to Add

Sunrise Ceremony

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Water Ceremony

Commented [m6]: Rebecca to describe

Walking With Our Sisters Specific Protocols

Keepers

A role held by traditional Indigenous women. In Sault Ste Marie the Keepers are Rebecca Beaulne-Stuebing, Dallas Abitong, and Linda Audette. The Keepers are responsible to keep the bundle and sacred items and ensure all traditional protocols are adhered to as advised by the Elders.

Elders

The Elders for the Sault Ste Marie WWOS project are Shirley Horn, Barb Nolan, and Brenda Powley. The Elders advise on all the traditional protocols for the project and provide gentle and loving guidance.

Commented [m7]: Rebecca to look over/clarify.

Exhibit Helpers

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If you have a shift at the start of the day please arrive 1/2 before the opening of the exhibit. If you are working a shift at the end of the day be prepared to stay 1/2 hour after closing time to help with closing and to debrief. ALL volunteers will need to smudge before each shift.

Three volunteers will be available during regular exhibit hours plus one Keeper or Elder. Health support will also be available on site or on call.

Health Support

The Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association will be providing health support throughout the WWOS Sault Ste Marie exhibit. A Residential School Health Support Worker or Cultural Support worker will either be on site or on-call at all times. If they are on-call they can be reached at 705-942-9422.

Installation and De-Installation Helpers

Everything is done observing protocols and ceremony. The installation is very important. It's like building a lodge and the lodge structure is the foundation of the ceremony. So the way the foundation is approached is also important. A team of between 8 to 12 volunteers (at a given time) are needed for 8-10 hours per day for four days in order to install the work.

After the space has been smudged shoes can no longer be worn in the space (moccasins or slippers are okay).

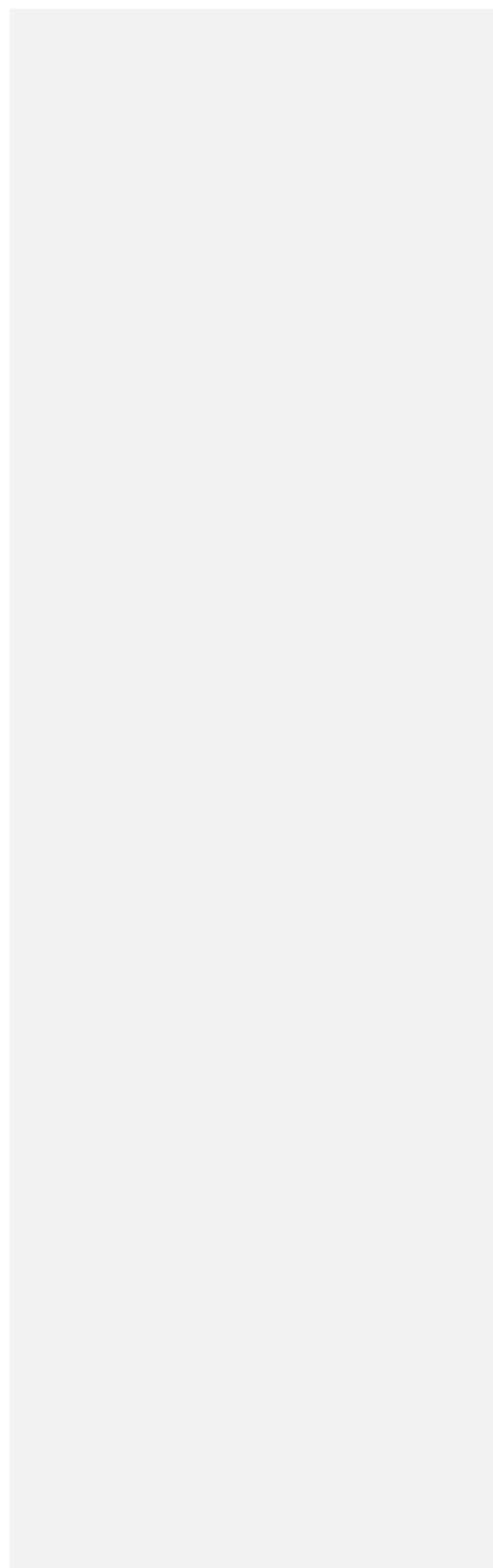
Vamps

"Vamps" are also known as "moccasin tops". For this installation, they represent the murdered and missing women's unfinished lives. Each *vamp* is represented by their maker and is significant to that individual. We cannot share that individual's story, we can only absorb the beauty/hurt of their story. Vamps are not to be stepped over under any circumstance. Anyone touching the vamps during installation must smudge first and use gloves. Once the exhibit is open only Keepers of Grandmothers will touch and move vamps.

Removing of shoes

Once the space has been smudged at the beginning of installation shoes can no longer be worn in the space (moccasins or slippers are okay). This applies to all volunteers, helpers, and visitors to the space. If someone cannot remove their

shoes for medical reasons there will be shoe covers available (but only is absolutely necessary).



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Sage

Sage is used to prepare people for ceremonies and teachings, as well as for cleansing the spirit, heart, body and mind. It is a purification smudge used to cleanse the individual of anything that might be troubling them. Sage is also recognized as women's medicine and widely used in circles, teachings, meetings, etc., because the women are included in the smudging ceremony.

Sweetgrass

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Ceremonies

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Women, in Anishinabe teachings, wear skirts to signify their role within their family, community and nation. It also signifies women's purpose in life and the solid foundation women have. Again, each teaching varies by the region. The skirt worn by women is usually individual in colour and pattern, but some regions also have certain styles that represent them.

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Women, in Anishinabe teachings, wear skirts to signify their role within their family, community and nation. It also signifies women's purpose in life and the solid foundation women have. Again, each teaching varies by the region. The skirt worn by women is usually individual in colour and pattern, but some regions also have certain styles that represent them.

Smudging

There are different medicines used to smudge, we offer use sage and sweetgrass to cleanse and purify. Smudging is a cleansing ceremony, important parts to pay attention to are: eyes to see clearly, ears to listen with openness, mouth to speak with honesty and truth, hearts to feel and our Spirits to listen with open minds. People may also need to smudge afterwards to cleanse themselves further.

Removing of shoes

Once the space has been smudged at the beginning of installation shoes can no longer be worn in the space (moccasins or slippers are okay). This applies to all volunteers, helpers, and visitors to the space.