

CBYF PA offers an introduction to:

How to connect with an Elder

An introduction to culturally-appropriate practices from Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Dakota and Metis Nations

Thank you to Elders Liz Settee and Cecil Eashappie for sharing their teachings to help inform this work.

Where can I find an Elder?

Who is an Elder?

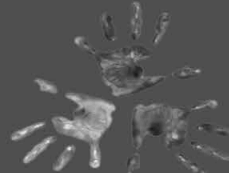
An Elder can generally be described as a person who has significant life experience living out their traditional Indigenous culture and values. Elders are recognized as Knowledge Keepers by the community and come into their Eldership through this community recognition. These people hold traditional knowledge that has been passed on through generations and are committed to sharing the knowledge with others to continue the transmission of culture, values, and teachings. People who we see as Elders may define themselves as a Helper, Knowledge Keeper, or Elder. It is best to ask how they want to be identified as these terms mean different things to individual people.

Where can I find an Elder?

Some people may know of Elders or knowledge keepers within the community with whom they have a personal connection. It is generally acceptable to ask someone, with an offering of tobacco, if they know of an Elder they could connect you with. Some community based organizations and Aboriginal organizations also have Elders who serve the community. Check with your local Indian Metis Friendship Centre or Aboriginal organizations within your community.

Local examples from kistapinânihk (Prince Albert, SK)
Some places you can contact to help you connect with an Elder are:

- PA Outreach Inc.
- Prince Albert Urban Indigenous Coalition Elder's Circle
- PA Indian Metis Friendship Centre
- Bernice Sayese Centre
- PAGC Urban Services
- Metis Western Region 2 Regional Office



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Introduction

Be Open-Minded

It is important to understand that everyone has different teachings. When approaching an Elder, always be open to learning. The Elder may tell you something that is different from other teachings that you have heard. Traditional teachings vary across Indigenous communities and every individual has their own teachings that have been passed on to them. Be humble and respectful and keep an open mind.

Practice Reciprocity

When you are asking for something from an Elder, such as a teaching or to sit and talk with you, always bring an offering. Providing an offering is a way of living out the value of reciprocity - giving back. Tobacco is typically used for these offerings.

You can buy tobacco and offer it the way it comes, or you can make a tobacco tie: a little bit of tobacco tied in a piece of cloth for the offering.

Ask for what you need

Be specific. When you offer the tobacco, let the Elder know what it is you are needing or wanting from them. Whether it is a specific teaching, their time, or to attend an event, it is important that you are specific. When you offer the tobacco, the Elder will take it if they are able to fulfill your request.

Give Recognition

Extend your thanks to the Elder for speaking with you. Always ask for permission to share anything that you have learned. If the Elder gives you permission to share your learnings, ensure that you credit them properly when sharing teachings with others.

