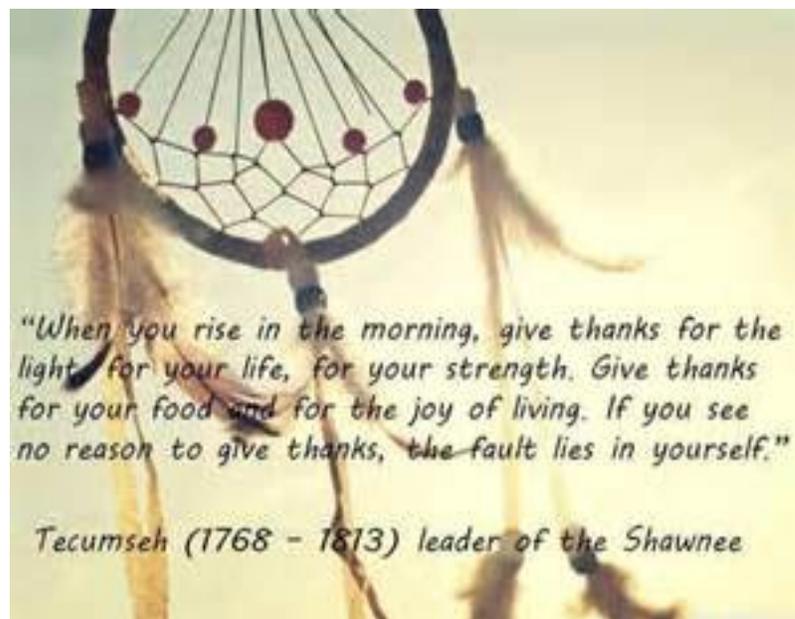


# **Sacredness and ceremony: an indispensable ingredient for healing the trauma of Childhood Sexual Assault in indigenous communities**

Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle Intertribal Coalition

## **BEGINNING DAY**

- Begin the day expressing thankfulness and gratitude.
- Make the ordinary extraordinary by making small ceremonies throughout the day
- Acknowledge the shared spiritual experience we are having with the land.
- Beginning the day with ceremony, purification of thought, action and deed.
- Honor the ancestors.
- Transform problems into blessings with hidden gifts.



## COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE

- Our individual wellbeing is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing of the community.
- It is the community, the Sacred Hoop (Circle) that determines indigenous knowledge.
- Importance of song and legends to strengthen community.
- When we hold meetings and council with one another it is good to start with what we agree on and move toward what we do not agree on – that becomes our beginning thanksgiving prayer. We start with the people, the earth, the grasses, waters, trees, plants, wind, moon, stars, sun, the universe. Acknowledge this at the beginning of each meeting and acknowledge at the end of each meeting.
- There is a growing understanding that the spiritual and secular can “live side by side”



indigenous cultures around the world



## SONGS AND LEGENDS

- Importance of song and legends to strengthen community.
- Loss of language and loss of religious ways needs to be reclaimed.
- Using song, dance, folklore, social rituals, making sure everybody in the community has a voice – leveling process.
- Tribal systems. The old stories recognize multiplicity at every level; it is all about interaction.
- It is important to have stories to pass on. This can be difficult when many of the stories come from our traumatic past. We can make comparisons between our personal stories and the stories of our children.
- Even when we come from violent alcoholic families we can still feel the love for each other, the wind, and the ocean.
- We can teach our children the sacredness of Mother Earth and the power of her healing when we experience trauma.





## GENDER EQUITY

- Women are sacred and are the creators of life.
- God is a woman and her name is Thought.
- Pregnant woman fell from the hole in the sky – Sky Woman Creation Story.
- Women have special ceremonies in Moon Lodges once they reach puberty.
- Men have special ceremonies once they reach puberty.
- Certain ceremonies, like vision questing, are important for establishing one's place in the community and one's purpose in life.
- There are special ceremonies for people who return from war so they can once again live in a culture based on peace.
- There are special stories for healing from sexual trauma based on tribal traditions.
- Elders hold the key to these stories and need to be asked to share the stories and ceremonies in a respectful way.





## **TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE AND HEALING**

- Those who harm need our prayers and ceremonies for healing.
- Ceremonies, such as the Sweat Lodge and Circle Process can be a part of healing for both those who harm others and those who are harmed by others.
- Share the Peacemaker's concept of the Great Law of Peace. First Principle is Peace; the Second Principle is Equity and the Third Principal is power of the good minds.
- Feminine principles mean organizing ourselves around the idea of interacting communities – plant communities, animal communities, supernatural communities, and human communities.
- This describes a relationship model in which we are all equal but we have different jobs to do on earth.
- It is important to reconstruct our communities to reflect our traditions and values.
- Traditions and storytelling reflecting tribal community values can be taught across the lifespan and provide a framework of primary prevention for all forms of relationship violence.
- We need a new story to rebalance the relationships between indigenous people and colonials. What we have is cowboys and Indian stories. We need to dispel the fear of the Indian.
- Community health is imperative if individual health is to flourish.

## **Experiential Healing Ceremonies**

One ceremony will involve an Apache healing ceremony

The second ceremony will be participant created.