



ʔəsɯələx̌w čəx̌w - You are Strong  
**Coast Salish Suicide Prevention Guidebook**





vancouver  
foundation



**N'alaga Consulting**

N'alaga / Kaaw Kuuna- Avis O'Brien (she/her)

avis@nalagaconsulting.com

**www.nalagaconsulting.com**

604.839.8853

# Table of Contents

## SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>1</b>
Contributors	1
Youth Contributors	1
Photography	1
Thank You To Our Team	2
<b>PART 1: ROOTS OF tok<sup>w</sup>imas</b>	<b>3</b>
Welcome - Ḡilakas'la	3
The Birth of This Initiative: Words from Avis O'Brien	4
Introduction to the Work	5
<b>Why This Work is Needed</b>	<b>6</b>
Reality & Urgency	6
Culture as a Protective Factor for Suicide	6
Ceremony Within Culture	7
<b>Ancestral Languages Reclamation as a Protective Factor for Suicide Prevention</b>	<b>8</b>
Language And Our Health	8
Language and Suicide	11
Program Goals	11
Options for Program	13
Parents Program	13
Overview Of 11 Week Cohort Modules	14
References	15
<b>PART 2: DELIVERING THE WORK</b>	<b>16</b>
Creating Your Team	16
Facilitator Team	16
Youth Program	17
Parents Program	17
Powerful Beginnings	17
Imagination Practices (Methodology)	19
Agreements	19
Participant Check In	21
References	23

<b>MODULE 1: CREATING A CULTURE OF BELONGING &amp; CEDAR BRUSHING CEREMONY</b>	<b>24</b>
Unconditional Positive Regard	25
Compassionate Witnessing	25
Culture of Belonging Exercises	26
Healing Powers of Cedar	26
Cedar Brushing Ceremony	28
References	28
<b>MODULE 2: SUICIDALITY AS A NORMAL HUMAN RESPONSE TO CARRYING THE BURDENS OF 500 YEARS OF ATTEMPTED AND ONGOING COLONIAL GENOCIDE</b>	<b>29</b>
The Problems With The Language Of Suicide	29
Suicidality As A Symptom Of Attempted & Ongoing Colonial Genocide (Dupius-Rossi,2021)	30
Externalizing The Burdens Of Colonization	31
Group Work Exercise: Burdens we are carrying	31
Ceremony: Giving our Burdens back to the land carrying	32
Centring Indigenous Wisdom	32
Collective Brainstorm: Center your Indigenous wisdom	33
References	33
<b>MODULE 3: IMPACTS OF TRAUMA &amp; HOW YOGA CAN ASSIST IN TRAUMA HEALING</b>	<b>34</b>
Trauma and Indigenous Peoples	34
Understanding The Autonomic Nervous System	35
What Happens When We Experience A Traumatic Event?	35
Symptoms of PTSD	35
Suicide And Dysregulation	35
Partner Sharing Exercise	36
Honouring the Roots of Yoga	36
How Yoga Can Help To Heal From Trauma	36
What Does Trauma-Informed Yoga Mean?	38
References	39
<b>MODULE 4: CREATING SAFETY IN RELATIONSHIPS - POLYVAGAL THEORY</b>	<b>40</b>
Polyvagal Theory	40
Universal Danger Responses	41
Partner Sharing Exercise	42
Vagus Nerve	42
Co-Regulation	42
Polyvagal Ladder	42
Small group Exercise - Safety in Relationships	43
Things We Can Do To Support Being In The Ventral Vagal State (Vagal Health)	43
References	45

<b>MODULE 5: NEURODECOLONIZATION &amp; TRAUMA-INFORMED YOGA PRACTICE</b>	<b>46</b>
What is Neurodecolonization	46
Neuroplasticity	47
The Brain on Ceremony	47
Singing to the Land	48
Journal Reflection Exercises	48
Journal Reflection Exercise: Replacing old networks with positive brain networks	49
Land-based Healing	49
Forest Bathing	50
The Effect of Forest Bathing on Physical and Mental Health	51
References	51
<b>MODULE 6: IDENTIFYING OUR ACTIVATORS &amp; TRAUMA-INFORMED YOGA PRACTICE</b>	<b>52</b>
Identifying our Activators	52
Reflection Exercise: Groups of 3 sharing	53
References	53
<b>MODULE 7: DEVELOPING OUR SOLIDARITY TEAM &amp; WEAVING OUR WELLNESS BASKET</b>	<b>54</b>
Developing our Solidarity Team	54
Signs we need to reach out to our solidarity team	55
Attributes for solidarity team members	55
Statements to stay away from	55
Journal Prompt	55
Weaving for our Wellness	56
Processing Cedar	57
References	57
<b>MODULE 8: NEW STRATEGIES IN PLACE OF SELF HARM &amp; WEAVING OUR WELLNESS BASKET</b>	<b>58</b>
Developing new strategies in place of self harm	58
Practices for self regulation other than substances & self harm	59
Journal Prompt or Group Brainstorm	59
References	59
<b>MODULE 9: DRUMMING, SINGING &amp; DANCING AS MEDICINE &amp; WEAVING OUR WELLNESS BASKET</b>	<b>60</b>
Teachings on Coast Salish Dancing	60
Neuroscience of Dancing	63
Teachings on Coast Salish Drumming & Singing	63
Neuroscience of Drumming & Singing	64
References	65

<b>MODULE 10: COLD WATER CLEANSE</b>	<b>66</b>
Teachings on Cold Water Cleansing	66
Neuroscience of Cold Water Submersion	64
Instructions for Cleansing Ceremony	68
References	69
<b>MODULE 11: BLANKETING CEREMONY &amp; TRAUMA INFORMED YOGA PRACTICE</b>	<b>70</b>
Teachings on the Blanket Ceremony	70
Guided Meditation for our last session together	73
<b>PART 3: dx̣ẉḍəẉuc̣id/dx̣ẉsṭəg̣ẉaq̣ẉ ḷəṣ̌uc̣id LANGUAGE RECLAMATION</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Tips For Yoga Teachers &amp; Language Teachers</b>	<b>76</b>
dx̣ẉḍəẉuc̣id/dx̣ẉsṭəg̣ẉaq̣ẉ ḷəṣ̌uc̣id Terms & Phrases	77
Yoga Forms & dx̣ẉḍəẉuc̣id/dx̣ẉsṭəg̣ẉaq̣ẉ ḷəṣ̌uc̣id Translations	82
dx̣ẉḍəẉuc̣id/dx̣ẉsṭəg̣ẉaq̣ẉ ḷəṣ̌uc̣id Reflection Questions	98
<b>PART 4: TOOLS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>100</b>
Why guide youth back to their bodies?	100
<b>Grounding &amp; Self Regulating Techniques To Open Each Session &amp; To Use Throughout the Program</b>	<b>102</b>
Grounding 1: Written by Ivy Richardson	103
Grounding 2 : Written by Ivy Richardson	102
Grounding 3 : Written by Ivy Richardson	103
Grounding 4 : - Witnessing the breath : Written by Jamie Hunt	104
Grounding 5 : Lengthen the Exhale - Developed by Yoga Outreach	105
Grounding 6: Belly Breath - Developed by Yoga Outreach	105
Creative Icebreakers & Imagination Name Games to Build Rapport	106
Name Game - Walk into the middle	106
Name Game - Creatively describe yourself	106
Milling - group exercise to strengthen our connection to each other	106
Emotional Freedom Technique	107
Energy Medicine Routine	108
References	109

# Suicide Prevention Resources

**Call Crisis Service Canada** @ 1.833.456.4566, or text us at 45645 between 4 PM-12 AM ET.

**1-800-suicide**

**Vancouver Island Crisis Line** @ 1888-494-3888

310-mental health @ 250-310-6789

**Aboriginal Child & Family Services - MCFD**

assessment and mental health support & therapy  
250-952-4073

**24-Hour Kuu-us Crisis Line** @ 1-800-588-8717

**Native Youth Crisis Hotline** @ 1-877-209-1266 (24 hours)

**Tsow-tun-lelum Helping House** @ 1-888-403-3123



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[www.nalagaconsulting.com](http://www.nalagaconsulting.com)

[www.vancouverfoundation.ca](http://www.vancouverfoundation.ca)

[cvts.ca](http://cvts.ca)

We want to honor the work of Riel Dupuis Rossi and Vikki Reynolds for leading the way in taking a social justice approach to suicidality. Their published works guided the development of our curriculum.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY

We want to thank the First Nations Health Authority for funding the additions of this guidebook to support our communities. This is a living document, and will continue to grow. If you feel we have missed important cultural teachings or knowledge, please feel free to let us know so we can add to it.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Avis O'Brien

Erika Doehring

Riel Dupuis-Rossi

Kirsten Dobler

Yola Willie

Ivy Richardson

James Quatell

Jaime Hunt

Maxine Matilpi

Nicole Marcia

Olivander Day

Leslie Wilkin

Vina Brown

Gail Peekeboot

Lia Hart

Darlus Jonsson

Shannon Alfred

Sara Keshavarz-Moqadam

Virginian Robertson -  
Siquitunaat

Kendra Paige - Suy'thlumaat

Blake Williams

Steven Recalma

Tsumqwatuns (Lawrence  
Mitchell)

Laura Elliot

Paula Charlie (Qi'yuptunaat)

Nancy Jo Bob ~ ᑭᓐᓐᓐᓐᓐᓐ  
ᓐᓐᓐᓐᓐᓐ

## YOUTH CONTRIBUTORS

Danielle Bilozaze-Lewis

Jessie Everson

Morgan Dawson

Somaya Sawyer

Nick Sheerbrook

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Bluetree Photography

Kimberley Kufaas Photography

Melanie Orr Photography

Kameko Walker Photography



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## **THANK YOU TO OUR TEAM**

### **Kwakwaka'wakw Youth Suicide Prevention Team**

**Team Lead / Facilitator** - K'áw kuuna / N'alaga, Avis O'Brien

**Clinical Therapist / Wellness Support** - Yola Willie, Kia Everson

**Trauma Informed Yoga Teachers** - Ivy Richardson, Maxine Matilpi, Jessica Barudin

**Language Teacher / Language Consultant** - Kirsten Dobler, Keisha Everson

**Elders** - James Quatell, Annie Joseph, Verna Flanders, Verna Wallace

**Clinical Curriculum Development Consultant** - Riel Dupuis Rossi

### **Kwakwaka'wakw Parents / Caregivers Support Circle**

**Facilitator** - Erika Doehring

**Clinical Therapist** - Noelle Hanuse & Maggie Sedgemore

## PART 1:

# Roots of ʔok<sup>w</sup>imas

### WELCOME - GILAKAS'LA

Gilakasdaḡw'la for your dedication to the collective healing of all Indigenous youth. Together we can shift the narrative of suicidality amongst youth in our communities. We want to support young People to thrive, heal, reclaim their ancestral cultural identity, and awaken their spirit to the beauty they carry within. This curriculum weaves together trauma theory, neuroscience, and ancient wisdom of our Kwakwakwa'wakw culture and languages to address the epidemic of suicidality by providing land-based, culturally rooted tools to resist the spirit of suicide. We are building safety and trust while holding space for youth to heal from trauma in community. The program aims to support youth in rediscovering and reclaiming the parts of themselves that colonization stole.

I express my deepest gratitude to the four brave youths participating in this initiative's pilot. It

is through the courage of these young People that this work was able to be delivered. They showed up every week, were vulnerable, and engaged fully in the program. My hands go up to the incredible young People leading the way.

This workbook gives folks the confidence, tools, and resources to bring suicide prevention from an Indigenous lens into their respective Indigenous community. Any Indigenous community can adopt this framework. The invitation is to use the framework but insert your Nation's Elders, language, land-based teachings, and culture into the curriculum to bring this work to life.

This workbook is written from the perspective of Avis O'Brien and the team that supported the program. There are references to support the work and the evolution of the program. They are also included to support your program.



**THE BIRTH OF THIS INITIATIVE:  
WORDS FROM AVIS O'BRIEN**

The seed for this program was planted in the Spring of 2021 when we lost one of our Namgis Youth, Tamika Mountain. She passed away to suicide at 18 and is now one of our fallen warriors. Her passing awoke a fire in me. I decided to no longer live in isolation with my own experience of living with the spirit of suicide, propelling me from the shame and silence of living with it. I have found my voice to be able to speak from a place of power about my experiences. By talking openly in safe spaces, we decrease the stigma surrounding suicidality. Our communities heal through authentic sharing

about ourselves and our experiences without fear of judgement.

I have lived with the spirit of suicide since I was ten years old. It is something that continues to come and go in my life. Our team developed this curriculum from lived experience, rooted in tools and teachings that have kept me alive for the last 30 years. This program compiles everything I wished I had access to as a young person. It also draws on the inner work I have done to understand the function of suicidality in my life: to hold my deepest wounds rooted in residential schools and colonization: shame, and abandonment.

I want to acknowledge a few programs that supported deep inner healing and transformation in my life. These programs provided me access to learning and healing that have helped shape this work. First, I acknowledge *IndigenEYEZ* for giving me access to the Creative Facilitation Training I completed. I learned all of the games and icebreakers that we use in this work through *IndigenEYEZ*. In 2019 I was connected to *Yoga Outreach*, and I learned about trauma theory for the first time through that connection. This learning helped me to understand how and why I was showing up in the world. I realized I was not a bad person; I was responding to trauma. I want to thank Nicole Marcia, Director of Teacher Training and Mentorship for Yoga Outreach, for mentoring me in facilitating workshops around trauma.

*The First Nations Women's Yoga Initiative (FNWYI)*, a trauma-informed yoga training for Indigenous women that has evolved into a grassroots initiative led by Indigenous and South Asian yoga teachers, called the Indigenous Yoga Collective, accepted me. The FNWYI was a partnership between Kwakwaka'wakw doctoral researcher Jessica Barudin and the Yoga Outreach Society. The FNWYI empowered me to understand how and why culture is so healing through the work of Dr. Michael Yellowbird, *Neurodecolonization*. It connected me to a healthy network of empowered Indigenous women doing the healing work for themselves and their community. Finally, *Roots To Thrive*, a 12-week outpatient treatment program for folks struggling with PTSD, taught me about unconditional positive regard and compassionate witnessing and supported me in healing in community. It was a place where I felt seen, heard, and supported in my mental health struggles. The healthiest I have been in my life was when I was engaged in *Roots to Thrive*.

The healing and connections made through those three organizations deeply inspired this curriculum. I want to thank *IndigenEYEZ*, *Yoga Outreach*, and the team at *Roots to Thrive* for leading the way to wellness for our People. Your work has

helped to save my life. Your work has helped me to understand suicidality, and helped me to cultivate the courage to develop this program. Gilakas'la for leading the way for our People.

Please note, when reading this document, when you read "I," that refers to myself, Avis O'Brien. When you read we or us, that refers to our suicide prevention team.

## **ADAPTING FOR COAST SALISH COMMUNITIES**

This version of the book has been adapted to support nuučaanuḡ communities. The framework has remained the same, but the language and Cultural sections have been adapted to include nuučaanuḡ teachings on Cold Water Cleansing, Healing powers of Cedar, Drumming and Singing and Dancing. This is a living document, and will continue to grow. If you feel we have missed important cultural teachings or knowledge, please feel free to let us know so we can add to it.

We want to thank the First Nations Health Authority for funding the adaptations of this guidebook to support Coast Salish communities. We also thank the Duwamish Tribe

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK**

In the spirit of honouring the life of Tamika Mountain and the youth in Kwakwaka'wakw territory that we have lost, we honour their lives by developing this program to help other young People navigate the spirit of suicide. Providing youth with tools and resources to utilize during times of crisis, or in the words of Dr. Vikki Reynolds, our "howling at the moon moments" are aptly demonstrated through the program.

Most suicide prevention work focuses on 'how to talk to someone who is suicidal' rather than 'how to resist giving into the spirit of suicide within ourselves.' Our program works toward resisting the spirit of suicide within Indigenous youth.

In this initiative, suicidality is a normal human response to carrying the burdens of 500+ years of attempted and ongoing colonial genocide (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021). Colonial pathologies are often internalized. In colonial approaches, individuals are pathologized, meaning that the cause and effect of disease and mental health originate within the person experiencing it. The causes are not acknowledged as being related to ongoing oppressions and intergenerational trauma.

We externalize the trauma by moving suicidality outside of the person experiencing it. By externalizing the trauma, Indigenous People can center the resiliency, wisdom, and connection to land and culture that was there before contact. This resiliency remains within the Indigenous community. This anecdote aptly conveys the current repercussions Indigenous People face. In moving away from programming that looks at suicidality as an individual problem, one founded on individualized responsibility versus institutional responsibility, we aim to address Indigenous trauma as a societally collective problem.

## Why This Work is Needed

### REALITY & URGENCY

There is a present epidemic of suicidality for Indigenous youth in Canada. Understanding the roots and causes of suicidality in Indigenous communities is imperative in understanding how to address it moving forward. The root of suicidality for Indigenous folks is colonial genocide. Residential Schools took our language and cultures, severed our connection to land, tore apart our family system, and brought shame into us through assimilation policies. In this program, we provide an opportunity

for youth to reclaim the parts of their identity that were stolen during the process of colonization as a protective factor to resist the spirit of suicide. (Wexler & Gone, 2015).

Suicide is the leading cause of death of Indigenous People between the ages of 11 - 44 (Talaga, 2018). This devastating epidemic has negatively impacted and felt throughout our families and communities. A 2019 report revealed that suicide rates in Canada are three times higher than the national average among the First Nations, twice the national average for Métis, and nine times higher for Inuit. The study, conducted between 2011 to 2016, further revealed that the rates of suicide were higher in males than females. An often overlooked and important consideration for our communities is the impact on non-binary and two-spirit People. This was not evaluated in the study. Additionally, rates were highest among young People aged 15 to 24 (Kumar & Tjepkema, 2019).

### CULTURE AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR FOR SUICIDE

Suicidality directly connects to the impacts of colonial genocide, including the intentional mandates and legislation to remove culture and language (Kumar & Tjepkema, 2019). As Chandler and Lalonde (2008) stated, cultural Indigenous continuity significantly reduces suicidal rates in Indigenous youth. **Indigenous youth are required to not only keep up with the standard requirements of growth and development but also try to form a sense of self and identity within a way of life that the government has largely overthrown.** This leads to “disillusionment, lassitude, substance abuse, self-injury and self-appointed death at an early age” (Chandler & Lalonde, 2008; p. 70).

Culture is the primary “treatment” utilized in addressing suicidality (Barker, 2017). A cultural framework addresses the Indigenous youth suicide crisis and improves their well-being (Gone, 2013;





Green, 2010). The framework recognizes Indigenous youth suicide as a community crisis that requires social change via cultural reclamation. To this, the framework highlights the importance of interconnectedness in healing. The main focus was on revitalizing traditional values such as family, meaningful roles, spirituality, Etc. (Durie et al., 2009; Chandler & Lalonde, 2008). Suppose suicidality is a response to our culture being stolen. In that case, we give youth back their culture as a protective factor to carry with them on their path forward.

The continuous use of Indigenous culture shapes a significant connection to our history. This connection increases the sense of belonging, positively contributing to preventing suicide attempts (Chandler & Lalonde, 2008). As Chandler & Lalonde (2008) stated, cultural continuity helps the natural process of identity formation.

Regarding the results revealed by researchers, those communities with several positive cultural markers, including self-governance, language, settled land claims, education, health care, cultural facilities, and infrastructure, experienced lower

suicide rates than those without these cultural markers (Chandler & Lalonde, 2008). Precise analyses of these communities showed that where about half of the members spoke the Indigenous language, the suicide rate dropped to zero (Hallett et al., 2007).

## **CEREMONY WITHIN CULTURE**

*Culture* is how we exist as Indigenous People. Engaging in Culture allows for the space to understand the ceremony as a way to connect to our ways of knowing and being from the teachings of our ancestors. The ceremony is the practice that connects us to all parts of our being - body, heart, mind, and spirit. They are gifts that our ancestors have given us. Through ancestral knowledge and intent, we can use ceremony to support our human balance (Iseke, 2010). Language and culture are not separate entities but are the same. Language is culture, and culture is language. The two are inextricably connected and rely on one another for survival. When languages die, our cultures will soon follow (Blair et al., 2002, & Norris & Jantzen, 2002).

# Ancestral Languages Reclamation as a Protective Factor for Suicide Prevention

## LANGUAGE AND OUR HEALTH

Language connects us to our history, Indigenous ways of knowing, values, and world views (Danto & Walsh, 2017). Language is one of the most meaningful symbols of Indigenous culture and identity (Blair et al., 2002) and a means for transferring culture (Norris & Jantzen, 2002). Learning Indigenous languages at any level, from basic to professional, brings our culture to life and can provide learners with a deep insight into core values, beliefs, and traditions (McIvor et al., 2009).

According to McIvor et al. (2009), Indigenous language has significant health benefits and can prevent health-related risks. In Indigenous communities, language and culture make us unique and alive in the face of more than 150 years of colonial rule (McIvor et al., 2009). Evidence suggests that urban migrants face reduced access to traditional activities, identity, and land and are more susceptible to experiencing psychological and emotional health problems (Wilson & Rosenberg, 2002).











## LANGUAGE AND SUICIDE

According to Battiste (1998), increasing the rate of using Indigenous languages can result in clarity and success in making meaning to life. **Hallett et al. (2007) reported that in some communities where at least fifty percent of members used knowledge of their Indigenous language, the rate of youth suicidal attempts declined to zero.** Reclaiming and utilizing our Indigenous languages is considered a mark of cultural persistence, a significant predictor of health and well-being in Indigenous communities (Hallett et al., 2007). The following graph highlights these findings:

Regarding Hallett et al. (2007), “youth suicide rates effectively **dropped to zero** in those few communities in which at least half the band members reported a conversational knowledge of their own “Native” language.”

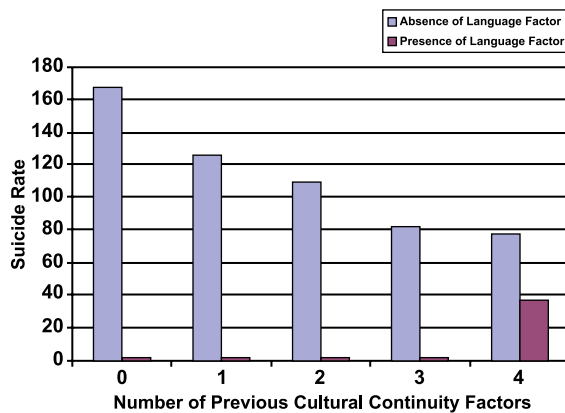


Fig. 1. Suicide rates for those bands with and without the language factor.

## PROGRAM GOALS

The program goals are bolded, and the notes underneath are talking points. Please feel free to add your personal story and relationship to the goal if it supports the program.

**Decrease stigma surrounding the epidemic of suicidality for Coast Salish Youth by creating a safe space for folks to share authentically.**

Suicide is the leading cause of death of

Indigenous youth in Canada. This fact tells us that many of us must live with the spirit of suicide, but because of the stigma surrounding it, few feel safe sharing their experiences. The main goal we work towards in this program is eliminating the stigma surrounding suicide and creating safe spaces where youth can share authentically about their experience living with the spirit of suicide. The one thing that has kept me alive since I started living with this spirit at ten is that I let someone in my solidarity circle know every time that spirit visits me. That is why the first goal is to decrease the stigma surrounding it.

**Educationally empower ourselves on the impacts of trauma on our minds, bodies, and spirits.**

Suicidality shows up when our nervous system is dysregulated, which is a result of trauma. Trauma leads to showing up in the world in ways that are not authentic to our true selves. It also leads us to turn to many things to try and regulate: drugs, alcohol, rage outbursts, self-harm, staying too busy, over-exercising, Etc. I lived with the impacts of trauma for my entire life but was unaware of its impacts. Learning and understanding the somatic impacts of trauma is one of the ways we empower youth to heal.

**Develop our abilities to utilize our Coast Salish land-based healing practices, breath, and bodies as acts of resistance and self-regulation as an antidote to suicidality.**

The spirit of suicide shows up when our nervous system is dysregulated. Our culture and land-based healing practices support us in moving into a regulated state where healing from trauma occurs. Cold water cleansing, cedar, drumming, singing, and dancing are healing practices we offer youth to utilize in place of self-harm and to resist the spirit of suicide. These practices have kept our ancestors healthy and balanced in body, mind and





spirit since time immemorial, which is why they were stolen from us. The government attempted to break our spirits, but it did not work. We are still here, and we will continue to do the work to reclaim all the parts of ourselves that make us healthy as a People.

**Create a culture of belonging and safety for Coast Salish Youth.**

Suicide needs to get us alone to kill us (Reynolds, 2021). For many of us, feeling alone or lacking in belonging is a significant risk factor. Feeling supported, loved, and belonging to a community that understands suicidality is a protective factor. Belonging is an antidote to the systemic separation that our People live with due to the federal government's laws separating us from everything that made us strong. We support youth to know that they belong to the land, the creator, their families, their languages and cultures. We aim

to create a culture of belonging for youth to feel seen, heard, and supported.

**Utilize  $dx^w d\dot{a}wucid/dx^w st\dot{a}g^w aq^w$  ləšucid language as a foundational part of our wellness towards reclaiming our identity.**

Language is one of the most powerful protective factors against suicidality and is an integral part of our identity. Knowing who we are and where we come from is wellness. Our work is to reclaim all those parts of our identity taken during colonization, including our Indigenous languages. Communities with higher numbers of language speakers have lower rates of suicide and vice versa. We must move forward with the healing and wellness of our People, with language being an integral part of everything we do. Language offers a glimpse into how our ancestors viewed the world. Our ancestors are in the spirit world with so much joy when we learn and practice our language.



## OPTIONS FOR PROGRAM

The original vision of this work was to develop an 11-week cohort. In developing the cohort, we lost youth to suicide in Kwakwakwa'wakw territory. We took the foundational suicide prevention strategies and condensed the 11-week initiative into a one-day program that is more accessible to communities. The one-day program also includes a support group for parents and caregivers of youth who live with the spirit of suicide.

**1-Day Program      or      11-Week Cohort**

## PARENTS PROGRAM

This 6-hour program offers support to the parents, caregivers or family members of bakwam (Indigenous) youth who live with the spirit of suicide. Not only have our youth been silenced

from the stigma of suicide in community and internationally, and so have the parents. When we began offering a one-day program to young People, many community members reached out with the desire to learn more about the language and tools. Many parents and caregivers have lost someone and want to understand and support others.

In this session, parents and caregivers will learn the language we use when working with the spirit of suicide. Additionally, we will share the tools that we provide to youth in place of self-harm for self-regulation. We aim to equip loved ones with the tools and resources to support youth during times of crisis. We support parents to show up for their youth in a way that makes the young person turn to them during their “howling at the moon” moments.

## **OVERVIEW OF 11 WEEK COHORT MODULES**

**Week 1** - Creating A Culture Of Belonging & Cedar Brushing Ceremony

**Week 2** - Suicidality As A Symptom Of Attempted & Ongoing Colonial Genocide

**Week 3** - Impacts Of Trauma & How Yoga Can Assist In Trauma Recovery

**Week 4** - Creating Safety In Relationships (Polyvagal Theory)

**Week 5** - Neuro Decolonization & Trauma-informed Yoga Practice

**Week 6** - Identifying Our Activators & Trauma-informed Yoga Practice

**Week 7** - Developing Our Solidarity Team & Weaving Our Wellness Basket

**Week 8** - Developing New Strategies In Place Of Self Harm & Weaving Our Wellness Basket

**Week 9** - Drumming, Singing & Dancing As Medicine & Weaving Our Wellness Basket

**Week 10** - Cold Water Cleanse Ceremony

**Week 11** - Blanketing Ceremony & Trauma-informed Yoga Practice

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## **PART 2:**

# **Delivering the work**

### **CREATING YOUR TEAM**

The most important thing to look for when creating your suicide prevention team is folks who have done their healing work and can speak from a lived experience perspective of navigating the spirit of suicide, mental health struggles, or loving someone who lives with the spirit. This process is how we reduce the stigma surrounding suicidality: we model for young People in that we, as leaders, can openly talk about it in a way that feels safe.

For this work to be successful, there must be a connection to culture and community. Thus, a team rooted in the community needs to be developed with folks with ancestry in the territory. If you are planning to bring this to your community, we ask that you hire local Indigenous People to run

the cultural elements. The more folks we can have from the nation, the better. Indigenous ancestry is essential for this work.

### **FACILITATOR TEAM**

Facilitation often looks easy, like a duck coasting on water. We do not see the ducks pedalling feet under the water, working tirelessly to keep moving. The reality is that there is a lot of preparation and self-regulation that facilitators have to practice. Asking folks to have lived experience for the work to be successful also means that triggers and past trauma will be present in work. We ask that facilitators cultivate their care regimens to protect themselves and the group in this work. This care includes but is not limited to

mindfulness, ceremony, community, and anything more that will support them in being present to the group with support set up outside of the space to care for them.

It is natural in discomfort and dysregulation for facilitators to default to presenters or teachers. The models that inform this work are about experiential learning. The group experiences the teaching rather than listening to a lecture. Experiential learning keeps the knowledge in the hands of the learners rather than focusing it all on the facilitator. Facilitators must be mindful of how much space they are taking up in the room.

There is a magical sweet spot of sharing from lived experiences but also taking up only a little space in the group, which takes away from the time the youth could be sharing.

## YOUTH PROGRAM

**Lead Facilitator for Youth Program** - A necessity when choosing a lead facilitator is that they have lived experience with the spirit of suicide and are comfortable speaking from that lived experience. We also encourage that they have some form of facilitation training and are confident in holding space for conversations about genocide, suicide and trauma.

**Language Teacher** - A solid foundational knowledge of the Indigenous language of the land of the territory where they will deliver the program will be essential. Being open to sharing about their mental health/suicidality struggles is also crucial.

**Therapist** - Has a degree in counselling psychology but is open to supporting the work from an Indigenous social justice lens rather than a clinical lens. Sharing lived experiences of their mental health struggles helps the youth feel safe. Western clinical therapy does not support this approach; finding someone open to this may take time.

**Elder** - Someone who is open to sharing from a lived experience perspective of living with the spirit of suicide or supporting those who live with the spirit of suicide.

**Yoga Teacher** - Trauma-informed yoga teacher training is mandatory, and someone who is open about their mental health struggles.

## PARENTS PROGRAM

**Lead Facilitator for Parents Program** - A requirement for choosing a lead facilitator for the parents' circle is someone who either lives with the spirit of suicide or has loved or lost someone to suicide.

**Therapist for Parents Program** - Has a degree in counselling psychology but is open to supporting the work from an Indigenous social justice lens rather than a clinical lens.

Someone who is open to sharing from a lived experience perspective of losing someone to suicide or being close to someone who lives with the spirit of suicide.

**Yoga Teacher for parents program** - Trauma-informed yoga teacher training is mandatory.

## POWERFUL BEGINNINGS

Powerful beginnings and closings are vital to the success of the program. These set the tone for how we will walk in a good way together throughout the program and ensures that the container is closed at the end of the day for the safest possible exit.

We start our work in the best way we know how, with an acknowledgment of the Unceded Territories in which our work takes place and by turning it over to our Elder to open us up with a prayer. We light a candle at the beginning of each session to bring in the spirit of our fallen warriors, those we have lost to suicide. We also recognize



through this candle lighting that the light surrounds us as a group in this work and that our ancestors are present for each of us.

Youth can check in on their feelings by using their imagination and creativity. We then move into our first trauma-informed breath and embodiment practice as a group, providing the space for youth to practice interoception, noticing what is happening in their bodies. We then move into a sharing circle. Name games and icebreakers are opportunities for youth to engage their imagination. Below is a

framework for opening up groups in a powerful way that creates safety.

- Land Acknowledgement
- Elder to say Prayer
- Light candle for our fallen warriors
- Invite folks to shift our awareness into our bodies for a trauma-informed breathing and grounding practice
- Check-in circle
- Curriculum

## **IMAGINATION PRACTICES (METHODOLOGY)**

Our work supports youth in opportunities to engage their imagination. Check-in circles, name games, and icebreakers have opportunities to engage our creativity and imagination. These facets help in healing trauma. Imagination is vital in dreaming of a new way of being. The learned systems and lessons need fixing, and we do not see a new way modelled for each of us. This is where imagination comes in. How can we bring our culture back, what does it mean for us, and what is possible in the future? Imagination is vital for change and growth.

Additionally, imagination activates the hippocampus, which is a part of the limbic system. The hippocampus is responsible for recalling memories, visual sense perception, and processing memory and emotion (Zeidman & Maguire, 2016). Increased limbic system activity is essential as this is the part of the brain impacted in the wake of a traumatic experience (Zeidman & Maguire, 2016). As Levy-Gigi et al. (2013) revealed, increased activity in the hippocampus positively correlates with healing from PTSD. We will dive deeper into learning about the limbic system in Module 9.

The default mode network (DMN) is a term to describe several brain areas that work together (Jung et al., 2016). The DMN is like our autopilot: what our brain does when we are not asking it to do anything. What happens for folks who do not come from trauma backgrounds when we are not task-oriented is feelings of joy, creativity, rest, and rejuvenation. However, when we come from complex trauma, the voice of the DMN is self-deprecation, shame, blame, and little explosions of horror (Andrea Samadi, 2020). With this internal voice of shame, many People seek to numb, hide, and disassociate. As Jung et al. (2016) stated, The DMN is responsible for the following:

- Remembering The Past
- Visualizing The Future
- Mentalization Of The Thoughts And Perspectives Of Other People

When we experience trauma, connectivity in the DMN decreases between the different regions (Lokshina et al., 2021). This is problematic as we need these other brain regions to work together. Engaging our imagination results in increased activity in the DMN, which supports trauma recovery (Jung et al., 2016).

Creativity can protect against trauma by improving resilience as a coping mechanism (Metzl & Morrell, 2008). The name games, ice breakers, and check-in prompts in this curriculum include opportunities for youth to use their imagination. When youth engage their imagination, it increases creativity. Engaging our creativity helps to connect the DMN and increases hippocampal volume, assisting youth on their path to trauma recovery (Rubinstein & Lahad, 2022).

## **AGREEMENTS**

The agreements are the vessel in which we will achieve the goals/learning objectives for the initiative. These agreements help to create the container for learning and to establish group norms. Many of us have different needs for how we feel safe to learn and step out of our comfort zones. We use agreements as a way to talk about these needs.

Safety needs to be created for youth to feel comfortable opening up and sharing their authentic selves with the group. Agreements are the parameters we put in place to create a container of safety for this work. Similar to the goals, the agreements are listed here with talking points. Please feel free to adjust these to be in alignment with your voice.

**Example Agreements:****What Is Shared Here Stays Here**

Confidentiality is the most binding agreement in creating a safe space. What is shared by youth in the space needs to stay in the space. We ask that anyone taking notes not write any details of someone else's stories and only share their learnings. Additionally, if there are any workers in the space that have a duty to report, they must communicate this explicitly and clearly.

**Be Open To Trying New Things**

Some of the things youth will be engaging in through the program will be new to them. Being open to trying new things is essential, as you never know when you may find a new gift that brings you joy or helps you feel more relaxed in your body.

**Take Good Care Of Ourselves**

We encourage youth to care for themselves in whatever feels best for them. This program is challenging work. Sometimes the conversation can become overwhelming. Taking a break when needed, stepping outside, or anything else.

**Offer Unconditional****Positive Regard To Each Other**

Invitation to view everyone in our group as they are showing up as best they can with the tools they have. We do not withdraw our positive regard if someone says something we disagree with or shows up in a way that irritates us.

**Compassionately Witness Each Other**

One of the ways we can achieve unconditional positive regard is through compassionate witnessing. We witness what is shared by listening less with our ears and more with our bodies and hearts. Paying attention to what resonates in our





bodies when someone is sharing is a powerful reflection to be communicated back to the person.

### Take Space And Leave Space

Some of us are comfortable speaking up in a group, and some are less inclined to have our voices heard. We want to hear from everyone. This agreement is an invitation to be mindful of how much space we are taking up in the group and make sure we make room for others to share.

### Take What You Like And Leave The Rest

Some things will resonate with you, and others won't. We invite youth to take what works for them and leave the rest.

### If You Are At Risk Of Harming Yourself Or Others, You Will Let Someone On Our Team Or Your Primary Support Person Know

To ensure the safety of all youth, we ask that youth agree to let us know if they feel like harming

themselves or someone else so we can support them in utilizing other tools in place of self-harm.

### Refrain From Dating

We invite youth to utilize this space for their wellness and try to keep friendly, not romantic, relationships. Dating can bring up attachment wounds, making engaging in this work challenging and changing the group dynamic. This agreement is not to say feelings will not still arise, but keeping romantic dynamics outside the group space is one way to keep the space safe for everyone.

## PARTICIPANT CHECK IN

Every group is a facilitated circle. The circle is important as it lets us know that we are all equal in space. **The facilitator and support staff are equal to the youth. We are all in this together and working together as one for the greater good.**



At the beginning of each group, youth have the check-in option. We encourage using a feather, fan, or another sacred item as a talking stick to pass around the circle. Whoever has the feather is whom we are giving our attention. Below are some ideas for check-in circle prompts that you can utilize:

- Share your name
- Pronouns
- Indigenous Ancestry
- Come up with an adjective that starts with the first letter of your first name and a hand motion to go with it: Please have the group mirror this back. Mirroring shows acceptance to join the actor in their silliness and builds trust.
- What in your life called you on this journey? (session 1 only)
- Mime something that brings you joy.
- What is your hope or intention in moving forward with this work?
- What is one thing that spoke to your head and one thing that spoke to your heart so far in the program? (this is great for session 5, the halfway mark)
- If you were to describe how you feel using a weather system, what system would you be and why?
- If you were to describe how you feel by using an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- What is one place that you go to that sings to your spirit?
- Invitation to share 1 or 2 emotions that are present for you right now
- Invitation to share 1 or 2 body sensations that are present for you right now
- Share a place that you go to that brings you joy (the beach, the forest)

### A note on pronouns:

We encourage folks to share their **pronouns**: Pronouns are an important part of our identities—they are the basics of **how we want others to address us**. We are in the practice of **normalizing** pronouns. Gender is a **social construct**, and some folks don't identify with the sex/gender they were **assigned at birth**; we desire to make this space **safer** for everyone; this is a **small** way that we can **acknowledge & welcome gender-diverse identities**.

**\*\*We are not mandating pronouns.** This clarification is necessary because some People are not in places where they feel safe to share. We force folks to share pronouns they don't identify with if we mandate them. We invite People to share their names and include their pronouns if they feel comfortable doing so.



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## MODULE 1:

# Creating a Culture of Belonging & Cedar Brushing Ceremony

*This 3-hour session creates a culture of belonging. Colonization systemically separated our People from everything that made us strong as a People: the land, our culture, our families, our bodies, and our languages. We know that suicide needs to get us alone to kill us. An antidote to this separation is creating a culture of belonging and connection. We all deserve to be seen, heard and supported in our struggle. We offer youth the opportunity to participate in a cedar brushing ceremony to close our session. Brushing is our first introduction to the healing powers of cedar.*

Week one is about creating a safe container for this work. Through a series of check-in questions and icebreakers that engage our imagination and set goals and agreements, we aim to create a relational container for youth to be seen and heard in their current struggles navigating the spirit of suicide. We strive to create a space rooted in unconditional positive and compassionate witnessing for each other.

Suicide needs to get us alone to kill us (Reynolds, 2021). So a large part of suicide prevention is creating a culture of belonging (Reynolds, 2021). Colonization systematically separated Indigenous People from each other. The colonial government enacted legislation, such as the Indian Act, to

remove the things that make Indigenous Peoples strong. The Indian Act is a genocidal erasure tool meant to eradicate Indigenous People.

This systemic separation separated us from our families through residential schools, from our sacred connection to the land through the reservation system and our languages and traditional forms of wellness and healing through assimilation policies. We were separated from our sense of self and safety within our bodies through the violence and abuse we endured in residential schools. That trauma experienced has passed through to the next generations. Our People were systematically separated, so part of staying alive is connecting and creating a culture of belonging.

**Let's talk about what belonging means:**

**Show of hands:** How many People felt alone in a room full of People?

**Show of hands:** How many People felt belonging while alone?

**Invitation, one or two People share:** Belonging feels like: \_\_\_\_\_

## **UNCONDITIONAL POSITIVE REGARD**

A foundational part of creating safety and a culture of belonging is to bring in the teachings of Unconditional Positive Regard. Unconditional Positive Regard is a concept coined by Psychologist Carl Rogers in 1959. It is a skill utilized in therapeutic settings, allowing folks to experience their feelings safely (Rogers, 1979).

The main focus of unconditional positive regard is warm acceptance of the individual precisely as they are (Ludeking, 2022). It is an essential part of wellness and improving mental health as it helps folks to see their value and accept who they are, reducing the gap between the ideal and the actual self. The most important outcome of unconditional positive regard is a sense of self-worth and psychological well-being. Individuals with a great sense of self-worth are more confident and motivated to follow their goals and work toward self-actualization because they believe they can accomplish them (Why Therapists Use Unconditional Positive Regard With Their Patients, 2020).

In this work, we accept everyone for who they are. Positive regard is not withdrawn if the person makes a mistake, says something that we disagree with, or if they show up in a way that is irritating to us. We see each and every person in the space as we are all doing the best we can with the tools we have.

One way to practice unconditional positive regard with each other is through something called compassionate witnessing.

## **COMPASSIONATE WITNESSING**

Compassionate witnessing can lead to relief and comfort for folks who have experienced trauma. It can support us in experiencing those hard-to-feel emotions like sadness and hurt with compassion instead of neglecting or denying the hurt (Germer & Neff, 2015).

Compassionate witnessing implies suffering is a normal part of life, and no one can escape it. This interpretation can release some of the pain we may be carrying. It helps us to see that many People suffer similarly and that we are not alone.

Regarding traumatic stress, validating the events as traumatic and the following stress responses as normal human responses will support the survivor in making meaning to the confusing symptoms induced by the trauma. In this process, survivors can validate their traumatic experiences, build safe boundaries, and practice self-care instead of experiencing shame or fear (Penttinen, 2016).

In this work, we invite youth and facilitators/supporters to listen to what People share with our bodies and emotions instead of our minds. We are used to listening with our minds, often preparing something clever to respond with, bringing in a similar experience or offering advice.

Compassionate witnessing can support us in utilizing our bodies as a resource to recognize what is alive inside of us. It is an invitation to notice what is happening in our hearts and bodies when someone shares and reflects their strength to them. Being compassionately witnessed helps us to feel seen and heard in our struggles.

In the group setting, when someone shares, we invite 1 or 2 People to witness the person who shared compassionately. This practice helps folks to feel seen, heard, supported, and connected in their struggle. **Here are a few ways we can respond when someone shares, as learned through the Roots to Thrive Program:**

“I see you”

“I am with you”

“you matter”

“I heard”

“I felt ... sensation/emotion”

“I sense that ..... is deeply important to you”

“I see how that impacted you”

“I see how you felt”

“You were so strong”

## **CULTURE OF BELONGING EXERCISES**

To help youth to connect to the People and places that create feelings of belonging and connection, we break into groups of 3 (ideally three youths with one facilitator) and answer the following questions :

**Who are the People and/or places that give you a sense of belonging?**

**What about that person gives you a sense of belonging and connection?**

We encourage youth to focus less on the person and more on what it is about the person that creates that sense of belonging and connection (words, expressions, how they show up for you, body language, Etc).

## **HEALING POWERS OF CEDAR**

Written by : Laura Elliot

Cedar is a powerful and sacred tree in our Coast Salish communities in many ways. Cedar provides bark to weave with, wood to build our homes, canoes for transportation and carvings. We use the boughs of the cedar tree to brush ourselves off for healing. Cedar Brushing can be done during a cold water bath. The branches can also be used in homes for protection from unwanted spirits and other energies that disturb our peaceful homestead.

In Cowichan teachings we are taught, “all things are connected”. Cedar connects us to our mother earth and provides us healing. When we are taught how to harvest cedar, we are taught to offer a prayer and words of gratitude for the tree sacrificing a part of itself so we are able to weave beautiful creations. We are taught to prepare bark with good feelings so that our creations are woven with no mistakes and carry that good energy.

Cedar will tell us when it's time to take a break from weaving. If you continue weaving once you know it's time to take a break, you will keep making mistakes or the piece will just not work out. This is when it is suggested to take a break and sit with ourselves to see and understand our emotions. This could help us to understand what we need to focus on in our healing journey. It could be sadness, anger, or something larger like unresolved trauma. Cedar brings us to a direct place of healing. Cedar also has the ability to bring us joy and happiness and to settle our inner being.

We bring our children with us when we harvest cedar bark, to teach them and guide them in understanding the process. This is providing an opportunity to pass traditions and skills on to the next generation. When we harvest we have had many hours of silence, times of laughter and times of reflection on our lives. At the end of harvesting, we always leave the forest with feelings of gratitude, re-energized and a little more healed.





Cedar is the tree of life. It stands tall and strong and connects us to the land. Cedar can be utilized in many forms and helps us to heal. We are thankful to have this medicine to create with, to heal with and to teach with.

## CEDAR BRUSHING CEREMONY

To close the first session, we offer participants to experience the powerful healing properties of cedar by offering a cedar brushing ceremony. This work needs to be done by an equipped Elder with knowledge of how to conduct the ceremony.

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## MODULE 2:

# Suicidality As A Normal Human Response To Carrying The Burdens Of 500 Years Of Attempted And Ongoing Colonial Genocide (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021)

*In this 3-hour session, we look at the root cause of suicidality: genocide. Suicidality is a normal human response to carrying the burdens of 500+ years of attempted and ongoing colonial genocide. Together we will unpack the problems with the language of suicide and learn about how the mental health system pathologizes us. We explore the idea of externalizing burdens of colonialism we may be carrying and, in turn, create space to center our Indigenous wisdom, all the beauty and strength we inherited from our ancestors.*

### THE PROBLEMS WITH THE LANGUAGE OF SUICIDE

Suicide is the leading cause of death of Indigenous folks aged 11-44 (Talaga, 2018). When we use the language of suicide, it disappears the political context of the violence we experience as Indigenous People (Reynolds, 2021). **This genocide and violence are attempted and ongoing (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021).** Colonization is not something that happened in the past and is now over.

Here is an invitation to see what it would be like to change our language surrounding suicidality.

Instead of saying the leading cause of death of our People is suicide, what if we say the leading cause of death of our People is genocide? People do not just kill themselves. Hate kills them (Reynolds, 2021). Colonial legislation and policies place hatred on us. Legislation that systematically tried to erase Bakwam (Indigenous) People from this planet. Now we are left with wounds and burdens. The unspeakable cruelty, dehumanization, tragedy, and oppression of what we have been through and continuously are faced with kills our People, not suicide (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021).





We also need to eliminate the word “commit” from the conversation. It is not a crime to die by suicide, but it used to be illegal. This law changed in the 1970s. We commit crimes, not suicide. Using this language adds to the stigma surrounding suicidality (Reynolds, 2021).

### **SUICIDALITY AS A SYMPTOM OF ATTEMPTED & ONGOING COLONIAL GENOCIDE (DUPUIS-ROSSI, 2021)**

The first step in working with suicidality within our communities is to name colonization and genocide as the root cause. The burdens we carry will show up differently for each of us. However, we must locate the root of the problem where it belongs, genocide enacted and enforced by the federal government. Colonial genocide is our People’s leading cause of death, not suicide (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021).

We must look back at the history of colonial genocide to understand this. The folks who colonized our territories saw our land as a way

to profit and get rich. We, as a People, interfered with that. They wanted the trees, the oil, the minerals, and the fish. They wanted the wealth of our territories. Many economies still practice this model today: wealth extraction and accumulation through over-development and harm to People and land. Canadian wealth does not include the poverty and health of Indigenous Peoples. This redaction furthers the agenda of genocide for economic gain and invisibilizes the reality of Indigenous excellence (Indigenomics).

For colonization to be successful, they attempted to break our spirits. They did this by:

- Tearing Our Families Apart
- Attempting To Break Down Our Way Of Life/ Ceremony/Potlatch Ban
- Inflicting Trauma And Genocide On Our Children In Residential Schools
- Systemic Separation From Land With Reservations
- Disempowering & Marginalizing Our Women

From Our Highly Esteemed Place In Society As Life-Givers

- Breeding Shame Into Our People Through Assimilation Policies And Residential Schools

Colonization is not a thing of the past. It is attempted and ongoing. The goal has always been to eradicate our People. Genocide continues with the Indian Act, MMIWG, overdose epidemic, racism in healthcare and judicial systems and high rates of incarceration and child apprehension.

**There is nothing wrong with us. We are not broken People. What is broken is the invisible interlocking systems of oppression that drive our world.** Staying alive and living a good life is an act of resistance to the impacts of colonialism. Suicidality is a normal human response to carrying the burdens of 500+ years of colonial genocide (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021).

## **EXTERNALIZING THE BURDENS OF COLONIZATION**

Once we have named the root cause of suicidality, we can start to acknowledge how the burdens of colonization are internalized. Not only do we internalize the violence, but we also internalize the disowned collective shame of colonization. There is a spirit to violence. Violence is out of sync with the human spirit. When our human rights are violated, and the sacredness of human life is violated, our souls react with shame. Shame is often at the root of suicidality, not depression (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021).

We can also externalize the pathologies placed on us by the mental health system. PTSD, depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and personality disorder are all rooted in trauma associated with colonial genocide. We can externalize these pathologies to create space to center what was there prior to contact (Dupuis-Rossi, 2021).

Diagnoses are helpful because we can use

them to treat our symptoms, but it becomes very problematic when we start to feel like our diagnoses are who we are as People when they become part of our identity.

Some burdens of colonization we may be living with and want to externalize:

- Poverty
- Loss Of Connection To Identity, Culture, Language & Spirituality
- Mental Health Struggles (Ptd, Anxiety, Depression)
- Poor Physical Health
- Struggles In Relationships
- Broken Family Systems
- Family Dysfunction
- Shame
- Abuse
- Racism

The group needs to see that these are the results of assimilation tactics. Indigenous poverty is directly related to Canadian wealth (Hilton, 2021). Loss of connection to language, identity, and culture results from ongoing harm, schools, and propaganda to separate and isolate Indigenous People from their families and communities. Physical health struggles have direct links to harm caused by colonization (Marya & Patel, 2021). These are not internal flaws - they are the results of policies of racism within the colonial governments.

## **GROUP WORK EXERCISE: BURDENS WE ARE CARRYING**

As a group, we invite participants to collectively brainstorm what burdens of colonization and residential schools we, as Indigenous People, have been carrying. One of our support People will write down all the ideas the group comes up with, so we can see them on paper.



Some examples that come up are: addiction, mental health struggles, poverty, domestic violence, loss of connection to identity, loss of connection to land, tearing apart of the family system, sexual abuse, and shame are a few ideas to get started with if Youth get stuck.

### **CEREMONY: GIVING OUR BURDENS BACK TO THE LAND CARRYING**

**Now that we have discussed these collective burdens let's give them back.**

#### **Activity to give this back :**

Invitation to go outside, find a rock and bring it to the land. With love, whisper your burdens to the rock and ask it to hold them and give it to the land with tobacco. Ask the land to take it back and help you carry it. Tobacco is a sacred medicine we can use to communicate with the creator. It is also a way to practice reciprocity. When we take from the land, it is essential to give something back to say thank you. Tobacco is an offering we can give back to the land. When we do this we can imagine we are

giving these burdens back to the government and churches, as this is where they originate.

Invite the Youth to stomp as they go on the land - stomping keeps our energy moving, so it does not get stuck.

Feel into our bodies. Where are these burdens located?

#### **You can ask the Youth:**

**What does it feel like when I say, this is not your fault? There is nothing wrong with you. You are everything your ancestors dreamed.**

### **CENTRING INDIGENOUS WISDOM**

When we externalize these pathologies, we create space for the Indigenous wisdom that existed before colonization and is still there (Dupius-Rossi, 2021). In the same way, intergenerational trauma gets passed down, and so does intergenerational wisdom. We carry all of our ancestors' beauty, wisdom and strength (Dupius-Rossi, 2021). The burdens we have carried are not who we are as

People. Centring our Indigenous wisdom is a way to connect to our authentic selves .

What was there prior to contact in your ancestral lineage?

- Strong Family Systems
- Knowing How To Work Together In A Community
- Cultures Alive And Strong
- Feelings Of Safety And Connection Within Our Bodies & Other People
- Spoke Languages From The Land
- Seeing Ourselves As An Extension Of The Land
- Survived Genocide And Kept Ceremonies Intact (Potlatching)

## COLLECTIVE BRAINSTORM: CENTER YOUR INDIGENOUS WISDOM

### Invitation to share your Indigenous Wisdom:

Write on poster paper so all youth can see and brainstorm together.

*Are there parts of you or your identity that you want to reclaim? What was there prior to the process of colonization that you wish to center?*

*What wisdom do you have within you, or passed down from your ancestors, that you want to center in your life?*

Once we brainstorm our Indigenous Wisdom, we give youth something sacred from the land to keep and continually remind them of their authentic true selves, inner Wisdom, and brilliance.

**A few ideas are:** a piece of tanned hide, cedar bough, sage, sweet grass.

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### MODULE 3:

# Impacts Of Trauma & How Yoga Can Assist In Trauma Healing

*This 3-hour session offers youth education on the impacts of trauma on our bodies, minds & spirits. We will learn about the autonomic nervous system, the symptoms of PTSD, and how we can utilize our breath, bodies, culture & land for healing from trauma. This is important as we know that suicidality occurs when our nervous system is dysregulated. Also explored is how gwi'nak'wgs (the land) can be a place we turn to to help release traumatic memory stored in our bodies. Facilitators will offer a 1-hour trauma-informed yoga class to guide youth back to their bodies safely.*

## **TRAUMA AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

In this work, we learn about the somatic (bodily) impacts of trauma. Importantly, as we discuss trauma for Indigenous People, we continue to face daily political implications of trauma.

Colonization is not something that happened in the past and is now over. It is attempted and ongoing (Dupuis-Rossi, 2020). Genocidal tools of oppression like The Indian Act still exist and profoundly affect the lives of all Indigenous People. For example, there are three times more Indigenous children in the foster care system than at the height

of the residential school era (Blackstock, 2004). The rates of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit folks missing and murdered are so high that it is classified as genocide (Library of Congress, 2019). Indigenous women are 16 times more likely to go missing or be murdered than non-Indigenous women in Canada (Library of Congress, 2019). Indigenous folks are also over-represented in the opioid epidemic and are five times more likely to overdose than non-Indigenous People (First Nations Health Authority, 2020). These are some of the modern faces of colonialism we face every day.

Our People are survivors and thrivers. Institutions like governments, churches and Indian Residential “Schools” deliberately attempted to eliminate what civil servant Duncan Campbell Scott called “the Indian problem.” He said, “Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department”(Scott,1920).

The “Indian problem” was getting us out of the way so they could get our lands and waters. However, our People are strong, and we are still connected to and protecting our territories.

### **UNDERSTANDING THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**

The curriculum around trauma theory was learned through The Yoga Outreach Society. Parasympathetic is often referred to as a “hypo” response because of the slowing down. One Elder described these responses as fawn and forfeit. Sometimes we give in and stop fighting when the parasympathetic is activated. Suicidality can show up in both of these responses.

### **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE EXPERIENCE A TRAUMATIC EVENT?**

The part of our brain that is responsible for integrating and making sense of the traumatic experience is called the hippocampus, which is part of the limbic system. When we experience trauma, the hippocampus becomes overwhelmed. As a result of this overwhelm, the emotions and thoughts associated with the trauma do not get processed as they usually would. That lack of processing can result in symptoms of PTSD (dysregulated nervous system) (Emerson & Hopper, 2012).

Trauma is not cognitive; it lives in the nervous system. Contrary to what our medical system tells us, the mind and the body are not separate but inextricably connected. Our thoughts and

emotions are affected, but trauma lives in the body. It is essential to highlight the relationship between mind and body and how trauma implicates them. A traumatic event overwhelms our physical system, which leaves us unable to process emotions and psychological aspects (Emerson & Hopper, 2012). I am thankful to Yoga Outreach and Nicole Marcia for teaching me trauma theory so I can share these teachings through this initiative.

### **SYMPTOMS OF PTSD**

These are all incredibly uncomfortable symptoms. These symptoms cause us to reach for substances, self-harm, stay too busy, over-exercise or other destructive behaviours to find relief, all in an attempt to regulate the nervous system (American Psychiatric Association, 2022).

**DISSOCIATION** - emotional & physical numbing out

**HYPERAROUSAL** - Inability to relax, anger/rage outbursts, difficulty sleeping

**HYPERVIGILANCE** - Waiting for the next bad thing to happen, feeling like everything is a threat (People feel threatened)

**INTRUSION** - flashbacks, nightmares, trouble sleeping

### **SUICIDE AND DYSREGULATION**

The spirit of suicide shows up in our life as a direct result of complex trauma during childhood. Chronic stress activates the Autonomic Nervous System, resulting in the hyperarousal of the Sympathetic & Parasympathetic Nervous System (SNS & PNS). These activations trigger defensive survival responses such as fight, flight, and freeze (Van der Kolk, 1996a, 1996b). Spiritually, when we experience trauma as children, the spirit of suicide attaches itself to a person. It attached itself to me when I was four years old and experiencing childhood sexual abuse at the hands of a family

member. Childhood sexual abuse is an epidemic in our communities because of residential schools. For me, suicidality and sexual abuse go hand in hand.

When we have experienced trauma, we become sensitive to stimuli directly or indirectly related to traumatic events. Therefore, objective or subjective threatening results in the activation of cognitive, emotional, and physiological symptoms, including emotions of fear, shame, rage, numbing of feelings, overactivity of the stress response system, and negative beliefs about the self (Corrigan et al., 2011).

Moreover, rapid switching between high and low arousal states is expected in those with a history of severe trauma. High arousal states can be modulated by suicide planning, starvation, abuse of alcohol and cannabis, bathing, grooming, compulsive cleaning, and self-harm. Low arousal states can be modified by compulsive activities involving grooming and cleaning, suicide planning, risk-taking (such as driving too fast), self-harm, and abuse of alcohol, amphetamine, ecstasy, or cocaine. Treatment approaches must involve patient education about these states and their role in symptom perpetuation (Corrigan et al., 2011). This is why we educate youth on the impacts of trauma, to empower them to know that suicidality is a normal response to what has happened to us.

### **PARTNER SHARING EXERCISE**

***Can you relate to living with some of these symptoms in your own life?***

***Can you see the correlation between living with these symptoms and reaching for substances, self-harm or other harmful behaviours to feel better (regulated)?***

It is essential to acknowledge the strength you carry to have survived all you have to get here today. You are so strong!

### **HONOURING THE ROOTS OF YOGA**

Yoga is a 5000-year-old Sacred Spiritual Practice belonging to the People of India. It is an Indigenous practice taken from its original form and turned into something different. It is vital to acknowledge whom these practices belong to and where they originate as part of our commitment to decolonizing.

The Sacred Practice of Yoga has experienced generations of colonization and appropriation. Important to acknowledge in this work the deep gratitude we have as an organization to utilize these teachings to assist in the collective healing of Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, I must acknowledge how deeply I have benefited in terms of my wellness and healing from these sacred practices belonging to the People of India.

### **HOW YOGA CAN HELP TO HEAL FROM TRAUMA**



If we have experienced trauma, a very adaptive survival strategy we engage in is disconnecting or abdicating from our bodies. Some trauma

survivors see their bodies as enemies (Emerson & Hopper, 2012). Yoga– especially trauma-sensitive Yoga– can help us heal from trauma because it helps us develop a more positive relationship with our bodies.

Yoga can help us to reconnect to our bodies. It provides an avenue for safely returning to our bodies after being disconnected after the traumatic experience. It allows us to befriend our bodies and utilize them as a resource for calming and grounding. Through mindfulness, breathing, and gentle yoga practices, we can develop a positive relationship and become friends with our bodies. Trauma-informed Yoga can be “an opportunity to create conditions for pain-free experiences within the body (Barudin, 2022).

Yoga can help us to bring our awareness to the present moment and notice and tolerate our inner experiences, which can have a “ripple effect on emotional and mental health, on relationships, and on our experience of living in the world” (Emerson & Hopper, 2012).

Breathwork, or pranayama in Sanskrit, the language of Yoga, is a significant part of the practice. Our breath is a resource for us. A tool for self-regulation that we have with us at all times. Like any skill, it takes practice to get comfortable with. Our breath can help bring us back to baseline arousal levels after being in a state of fight or flight or to refrain from entering that state altogether.







### **WHAT DOES TRAUMA-INFORMED YOGA MEAN?**

When we say our work is trauma-informed, we mean that everything we do is invitational. Youth have choices in everything that they do together. They do not have to do something that does not feel right for them. We use the language of invitation and inquiry in a trauma-informed class. This is meant to give participants a sense of agency.

In a regular yoga class, teachers will often assist (touch), which can be activating for folks. In a trauma-informed practice, no one will be touching you. No one will be standing over you telling you what to do with your body or where you should feel it (Rice, 2022). We recommend that the yoga teachers involved in this work undergo trauma-informed training.

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## MODULE 4:

# Creating Safety In Relationships - Polyvagal Theory

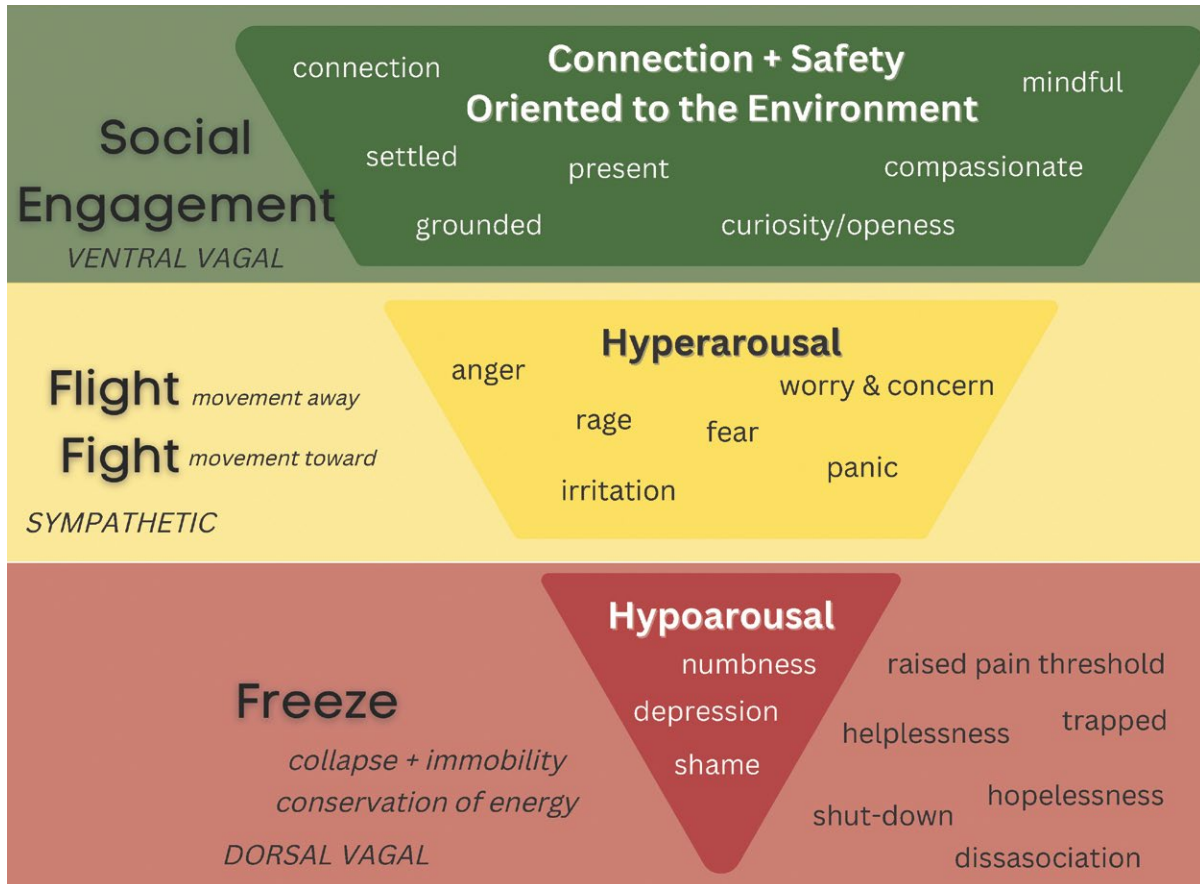
*We heal in the context of relationships. When trauma impedes our ability to be in safe relationships with People, it makes it very difficult to heal in the context of relationships. This 3-hour session will use the Polyvagal theory to help us understand why relationships can feel so threatening when we come from complex traumatic backgrounds, which is a direct result of the residential school system. We will also learn about the vagus nerve and how stimulating this nerve can affect positive health outcomes and counteract our fight/flight response.*

## POLYVAGAL THEORY

Why is Polyvagal theory critical? When we have experienced trauma like we as Indigenous People have (historical, intergenerational and lived experience), one of the ways we have been impacted is through our sense of safety and ability to engage in safe relationships. This can be problematic because we do not heal from trauma in isolation. We heal from trauma in the context of relationships. If you have difficulty being in a relationship, it is

tough for that healing to occur.

This theory helps us understand why we feel unsafe in relationships, feel threatened and misread people's cues. This information makes us curious about how we respond to real or imagined relationship threats. We can then start to explore what it would be like to allow more people into our lives who give us signals of safety and connection (make us feel safe and connected).



Our nervous system is an upside-down triangle at the base of our brain stem. In a safe, regulated state, we can access higher brain functions (the prefrontal cortex is where our rational thinking lives). These systems turn off when we are in danger states, making us defensive (PsychAlive, 2018).

When we are in a constant state of danger (dangerous environments/abusive situations), our nervous system finds it difficult to detect safety. If it cannot see security, it is in a state of fight/flight and has a low threshold to react. Moreover, when in this state, we misread other people's cues. So more likely to see neutral faces as aggressive and fearful faces as angry. This causes difficulty in relationships because we cannot utilize people to regulate if we feel threatened by them (PsychAlive, 2018).

All of these responses are not voluntary. Our nervous system picks up information in the environment and evaluates that information on a subconscious level. This is called neuroception

when we scan our environment every 4-6 seconds for danger (PsychAlive, 2018). We will dive deeper into neuroception further into this chapter.

## UNIVERSAL DANGER RESPONSES

According to this theory, there are three ways that we can respond to threats or danger. Whether that threat is a real threat, or a perceived threat (imagined)

- **Social Engagement** (most recent, most sophisticated, separates us from other mammals)
- **Fight or Flight** (oldest reptilian branch, primitive response) SNS
- **Freeze Behaviours/Collapsed Immobility** (oldest, reptilian, primitive)

These responses are all turned on by our autonomic nervous system (Slavich, 2020).



## PARTNER SHARING EXERCISE

*Is there one of these ways of responding to threats (real or imagined) that you engage in more regularly?*

*How do you envision your authentic self responding to real or imagined threats instead of reacting from a trauma state (fight-flight / shut down)?*

*How can you have compassion for yourself when you respond with fight, flight or dissociation?*

## VAGUS NERVE

The PNS has something running through it called the vagus nerve. This nerve is vital for healing from trauma. It is the largest nerve in our body, starting in our brain stem. Understanding this nerve and its function can help us move positively toward healing.

The vagus nerve has two branches:

### 1. Freeze & Immobilization Behaviours

(reptilian) - starts lower down in our spine

### 2. Social Engagement Behaviours (primitive)

- lives above the diaphragm, innervating the muscles in our face. It creates a face, heart, and breath connection. It is responsible for social engagement behaviours in the face of a threat (O'Malley, 2018).

## CO-REGULATION

Every human being, traumatized or not, scans their environment every 4-7 seconds for danger. This is called neuroception. On a fundamental level, we read these signals as if someone is safe or not safe to be around. We do this by looking at their faces, listening to their voices, and paying attention to their body language (Space Between Counseling Services (SBCS), 2022).

In a group setting, neuroception and how we respond to threats can be demonstrated by asking

someone (preferably another facilitator) to give you a facial expression they would make when upset with you. "Sally, please give me a look you would give me when you are hurt and mad at me." Sally will then give me a mean-looking face. This is the vagus nerve that controls these facial expressions.

"Because I am a reasonably well-regulated person, because Sally is upset with me, I am not going to move into a fight response with her. Chances are also good that I will not move into a flight response and start fighting. Also highly likely because I am reasonably well regulated, I will not lose consciousness because Sally is upset with me.

I can read the situation. Chances are, if Sally is upset with me, I will use my face, my voice and my body to signal that I am safe to be around, and she will pick up on those signals. When she picks up on the signs, they will start to down-regulate her nervous system, and she will send those signals of safety and connection back to me. I will send them back to her. It is called co-regulation and is a powerful tool for helping folks to feel safe, connected and supported.

However, when we have experienced trauma and haven't had the opportunity to metabolize it, integrate it, or work to heal from it, that level of engagement, that ability to co-regulate, can be impeded. When we say someone is dysregulated, we are talking about their social engagement system not operating optimally, which creates difficulty in relationships. If we constantly feel threatened by People, a response to that threat is to stay away from them." (Marcia, 2021)

## POLYVAGAL LADDER

The polyvagal ladder offers three different ways that we can respond to threats. At the top of the ladder, when we feel regulated, secure and safe, our brain operates from our Parasympathetic Nervous System, and we are in Ventral Vagal. Here we can rest, digest, socialize, and relax. As we move

down the ladder, our brain enters the sympathetic system, where our fight-flight response becomes activated to protect us. Moreover, our last line of defence is the dorsal vagal (Bailey et al., 2020).

**Depending on where we are on the ladder will determine how we respond to situations:**

You get a new haircut, and you go to work. You are still determining how you feel about it. Your co-worker says, “Hey, nice haircut.”

**In the ventral vagal, we respond:** “Hey, thanks.”

**When we are in Sympathetic activation, we respond:** “ya, I do not know if I like it, but thanks, I guess.”

**When we are in dorsal vagal, we respond:** “omg, why would they even say that to me? Now everyone is looking at me. This is so stupid. I shouldn’t have changed anything. I wish I were not at work anymore.”

This is an example of a very benign (gentle and kind) social situation, with three very different ways we can respond depending on where our nervous system is at. The state of our nervous system, where we are on the polyvagal ladder, determines how safe people are.

Our work ensures that we get enough of the proper relationship. Because if we are only getting People who respond to us in a threatening way and only tiny snippets of safety and regulation, that is a big load to carry. That is an uphill push. We want People in our lives who can co-regulate with us. That is what we strive for in suicide prevention work.

**SMALL GROUP EXERCISE -  
SAFETY IN RELATIONSHIPS**

*Who are the people in your life who send you signals of connection and safety? What is it about these people (words they say, facial expressions, body language, Etc.) that send you signals of safety and connection*

Invitation to share with your small groups which those people are.

**THINGS WE CAN DO  
TO SUPPORT BEING IN THE VENTRAL  
VAGAL STATE (VAGAL HEALTH)**

The vagus nerve connects the brain with all of our organs. Stimulating the vagus nerve can reduce the intensity of our fight-flight response (Sympathetic activation). Relationships feel more threatening when we are in Sympathetic activation (fight or flight). When we are in a more regulated state, the actions and behaviours of other people will not feel as threatening (Porges, 1997). This is assuming the people we are around are safe people.

**Drumming** (Geller, 2018)

**Singing** (vibrates the larynx) (El Tahry et al., 2011)

**Yoga** (The Art of Living, 2022)

**Slow Deep Breaths** (belly breathing) (The Art of Living, 2022)

**Laughing** (The Art of Living, 2022)

**Meditation** (The Art of Living, 2022)

**Humming** (vibrates the larynx) (El Tahry et al., 2011)

**Cold Water Immersion** (The Art of Living, 2022)

**Prayer** (Muñoz & Chaplain, 2015)

**Inversions** (any time we bring our heart above our head) (McWilliam, 1889)

**Sleeping or Lying on Your Right Side** (Yuen, 2017).



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## MODULE 5:

# Neurodecolonization & Trauma-Informed Yoga Practice

*In this 3-hour workshop, we explore the concept of Neurodecolonization, which is the work of Dr. Michael Yellowbird. We will learn how to heal from the impacts of trauma through Indigenous land-based healing practices. Engaging in Ceremonial, land, and culture-based practices serves as solid foundations for the health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples and are the ways we can move toward the collective healing of our People. We will also engage in a 45 minute trauma informed yoga practice.*



### WHAT IS NEURODECOLONIZATION

Neurodecolonization is the work of Dr. Michael Yellow Bird, Dean of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. His life's work has been to study what

happens in our brains and bodies when we are engaged in Indigenous contemplative practices, which we are involved in when we participate in all aspects of our culture. Engaging in these ceremonial & cultural practices helps us to maintain balance and wellness. These elements strengthened us as a people and supported a positive connection to our Indigenous identity. These parts of us were targeted during colonization as an attempt to break our spirits so colonization could be successful. Many of our People have lost access to these teachings, but everything is still there. Our culture and languages are part of our genetic makeup. They live in our being. These teachings inside us are asleep and ready to awaken when we reclaim them.

**Neuro:** specialized cells in the nervous system, brain and spinal cord that send and receive electrical impulses throughout the body (Yellowbird, 2014).

**Decolonization:** activities that weaken the effects of colonialism, facilitate resistance and create opportunities to promote traditional practices in present-day settings (Yellowbird, 2014).

**Neurodecolonization:** combining mindfulness with sacred, Indigenous contemplative practices to replace negative patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour with healthy, productive ones (Yellowbird, 2014).

Neurodecolonization seeks to understand how the stresses of colonization and genocide shape the mind and brain function. Some stressors include racism, hate crimes, loss of territories, culture and pride; high mortality levels, poverty, poor mental and physical health; and disregard for Indigenous Peoples' sovereignty and rights. Many Indigenous contemplative practices (drumming, singing, dancing, prayer, ceremony, Etc.) incorporate the same principles and processes as mindfulness approaches and are essential components of physical, emotional, behavioural, and spiritual well-being (Yellowbird, 2014).

Neurodecolonization also aims to build new empowered neural (brain) networks by deactivating old, ineffective brain networks that support destructive thoughts, emotions, memories and behaviours, particularly past and contemporary oppressions associated with colonialism. For example, past colonialism that might have created negativity, grief and rage – and activated our brain's networks of feelings of victimization – might be our memories of our ancestors' horrific abuses in residential schools or dealing with modern-day hate, racism and discrimination (Yellowbird, 2014).

## NEUROPLASTICITY

Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to change. Creative, healthy, decolonized thinking, actions, and feelings positively shape and empower essential neural circuits in the brain, providing the resources, strengths, and abilities needed to overcome colonialism (Yellowbird, 2014). Our brains can rewire, re-learn, and strengthen meaningful neural connections (Yellowbird, 2014). For decolonization to be successful, it must begin in the mind.

Unconstructive or negative thinking, feelings, and behaviours dampen and short-circuit the brain's creativity and optimism networks. They can also increase our susceptibility to stress, failure, complacency, and fear (Yellowbird, 2014). Neurodecolonization aims to delete the neural networks of colonialism and replace them with new ones associated with positive attributes and behaviours (Yellowbird, 2014).

## THE BRAIN ON CEREMONY

Brain scans show that when People are sitting in prayer or ceremony, the brain's right hemisphere becomes activated, which supports a sense of well-being, positive mood, and the release of serotonin and dopamine (feel-good chemicals). The more a person engages in prayer, ceremony, or mindfulness, the stronger the brain's right hemisphere becomes (Yellowbird, 2014).

Interoception is the perception of sensations from inside the body, which is one of the things that gets impacted by trauma. The more we can practice interoception, the better. Sitting in meditation, mindfulness, and prayer changes the brain structures associated with memory, sense of self, and empathy. These practices can also decrease stress, support empathy towards other humans and the natural world, and increase interoception (Yellowbird, 2014).

## SINGING TO THE LAND

Singing is a form of mindfulness. Singing to the land activates the parietal lobe, the part of our brain responsible for spatial reasoning. The part of our brain that tells us that we are separate from things in our external environment. When we sing to the land, the parietal lobe quiets down, and we see ourselves not as distinct from the land but as an extension of it. The more we sing to the land, the stronger that connection becomes. We can empathize, connect and communicate with the land (Yellowbird, 2014). This helps to contextualize why Indigenous People were such great stewards of the land. We did not see it as something to profit from but as an extension of ourselves. We know the land as our relations.

## JOURNAL REFLECTION EXERCISES

If we want to decolonize our minds, first, we have to look at how our minds have been affected by colonization. Then we can replace that programming of self-hatred in which we have been indoctrinated.

**What old, ineffective brain networks that support destructive thoughts, emotions, memories and behaviours, particularly oppressions associated with colonialism, do we want to deactivate in our brains?**

For example, an old ineffective brain network that supports destructive thoughts, emotions and memories rooted in oppression that I would like to deactivate is my fear of being hurt or abandoned in



relationships. I have a neuroception of danger and am afraid of people. My nervous system responds to this fear by attempting to protect myself - running away or pushing people away.

My fear of abandonment is rooted in the emotional abandonment of my childhood. Being emotionally and, at times, physically abandoned. This is not something I blame my parents for. This is rooted in the oppression my family experienced from the residential school system and our families being torn apart and abused. My family did the best they could with the tools they had.

**THOUGHTS:** everyone will abandon me or not show up, so I have to protect myself and run away before that happens.

**EMOTIONS:** shame, rage, sadness.

**MEMORIES:** all the memories of People not showing up in relationships start to flood in, reinforcing the belief that I will permanently be abandoned and continue to be hurt.

### **JOURNAL REFLECTION EXERCISE: REPLACING OLD NETWORKS WITH POSITIVE BRAIN NETWORKS**

Once we have started to reject these old destructive brain networks that create negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours in our life, we can begin to look at what we want to replace those with:

What personal resources, strengths, and abilities do we want to reactivate in our brains?

Example: "I want to reactivate my ability to speak my ancestral language."

OR

"I want to learn to trust and lean into my feelings underneath the trigger instead of cutting and running."

**THOUGHTS:** I am capable of learning my ancestral language. It is part of my genetic makeup, waiting to be awakened.

OR

I can heal my attachment wounds to have a healthy relationship and family.

**EMOTIONS:** awakening, joy, excitement

OR

happy, fulfilled, grateful

**MEMORIES:** The time when my desire to learn our ancestral language was awakened in my being. The moment that fire within was lit, it outweighed the shame I carried for not knowing my language.

The times that I have been in a healthy relationship and family and how nourishing, fulfilling and happy it made me. Being in a healthy family is the ultimate act of resistance to the impacts of colonialism, and I will continue to work for that.

### **LAND-BASED HEALING**

*"When we take the time to connect with Mother Earth, we realize that we were never separate. We ground ourselves in the inherent ancestral wisdom that we are coming home, and we are being received in return. We then realize that an act as simple as taking your shoes off and walking barefoot on Earth is medicine and that we are, in fact, part of that medicine. There is no separation, only interconnection. We become the medicine."*

- Vina Brown (ǰáqvás gǰwáqs ) Halízaqv  
& Nu-u-Chah-Nulth Yoga Teacher

Indigenous Peoples across Turtle Island have relied on land-based practices for wellness, balance, and healing since time immemorial. Everything in our lives came from the land: our cultures, languages, food, clothing, ceremony, transportation and telling the stories of our mythological beginnings. Trauma is not cognitive. It lives in the body and the nervous system. Land-based cultural practices can release traumatic memories stored in our bodies in the same way that yoga-based practices do. Healing through the land and our culture will affect the next seven generations and support healing for generations



that did not have the privilege to heal. When we walk the Red Road, we become conduits for our ancestors to heal trauma and pain they never had the opportunity to heal.

These Indigenous land-based practices can either stimulate the vagus nerve or connect the regions of the Default Mode Network of the brain, which is helpful for trauma recovery. These practices also connect us with the spirit world. Some practices that have kept Indigenous Peoples balanced in body, mind and spirit since time immemorial include:

- Cold Water Cleansing (activates vagus nerve)
- Drumming & Singing (activates bilateral brain stimulation - singing activates vagus nerve)
- Fasting Ceremonies (prayer activates vagus nerve)
- Sweat Lodge Ceremonies (prayer activates vagus nerve)
- Smudging (prayer activates vagus nerve)
- Prayer (prayer activates vagus nerve)
- Cedar Brushing (prayer activates vagus nerve, release traumatic memory to the cedar)
- Pipe Ceremonies (prayer activates vagus nerve)
- Dancing (activates bilateral brain stimulation)

## FOREST BATHING

We, as Indigenous People, spent a lot of our time in the forests here on the Northwest Coast. Everything of importance to our People came from forests and the ocean. Our People would sit and listen to the land where our language and culture originate. Moving forward with the healing and wellness of our People, we encourage spending time on the land in the same ways our Ancestors did, sitting and listening. Our People also spent a lot of time on the land and in the forest, foraging and harvesting. Our intention for sharing teachings on forest bathing is to inspire Indigenous youth to spend more time in the forest as part of our wellness

and maintaining balance in body, mind and spirit.

Forest Bathing is simply being in nature, connecting through our sense of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. It is a new medical science highlighting how visiting forests can help us to be more active, relaxed, healthier, and happier. Forest Medicine is an evidence-based preventive medicine. Regular forest bathing diminishes the risk of psychosocial stress-related disorders (Morita et al., 2007). According to Li et al. (2008), forest bathing



trips reduced adrenaline concentrations in both males and females. Being in the forest activates the Parasympathetic nervous system; our bodies' built in a calming response (Li, 2010)

In the forest, we breathe in a substance released from trees called phytoncides, essential wood oils. These substances contain antimicrobial organic compounds. Combining forest bathing trips with a good lifestyle was suggested in 1982 by the Forest Agency of Japan for the first time and is now identified as a relaxation or stress-reducing treatment. Spending time in the forest can notably reduce anxiety, depression, and aggression (Li, 2010).

## THE EFFECT OF FOREST BATHING ON PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

According to Li (2019), forest bathing can increase both physical and mental health by reducing stress in the following ways:

1. Preventive effect on cancers.
2. Decreases stress hormones, such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, and cortisol, resulting in positive stress management.
3. Reduces blood pressure and heart rate, which can prevent hypertension.
4. Promotes activation of the PNS and reduces SNS resulting in the sense of relaxation
5. Decrease the symptoms of anxiety, depression, aggression, fatigue, and confusion while increasing vigour, resulting in a preventive effect on depression.
6. Increase our quality of sleep
7. People living in areas with higher forest coverage notably have lower mortality rates of cancers than those with lower forest coverage.
8. Phytoncides released from trees significantly increased human intracellular levels of anti-cancer proteins such as perforin, granzymes, and granulysin.

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## MODULE 6:

# Identifying Our Activators & Trauma-Informed Yoga Practice

*In this 3-hour workshop, youth will be supported to identify their activators, the situations and/or People that send us into our howling at the moon moments. This is the first step in developing safety plans to stay alive while the spirit of suicide visits us. We also offer a trauma-informed yoga class to help integrate and regulate our nervous system. Kwakwala is offered during the yoga session to support the somatic experience of being embodied while hearing our language.*

### IDENTIFYING OUR ACTIVATORS

We do not harm ourselves or take our lives when our nervous system is regulated (top of the triangle - ventral vagal). Dr. Vikki Reynolds, a woman leading the way in suicide prevention from a social justice lens, calls these moments of dysregulation our “howling at the moon” moments (Vikki Reynolds Ph.D., 2021).

The first step in supporting youth to develop a suicide prevention safety plan is to determine what specific People, situations and feelings send us into our “howling at the moon” moments, making us feel like ending our life. Identifying our hardest-to-feel emotions and most activating or challenging situations will be integral in staying alive, which is an act of resistance to the impacts of colonialism.

## REFLECTION EXERCISE: GROUPS OF 3 SHARING

Invitation to share with your small group about the situations that are most activating for you (option to journal instead)

For me, the brokenness of my family as a result of colonialism, experiencing lateral violence, not being included, bullying, feelings of rejection, abandonment or shame and physical health

struggles are what send me into my howling-at-the-moon moments.

*What thoughts, feelings, People, situations or burdens cause you to feel the spirit of suicide in your life?*

After youth have shared in small groups and journaled about their activators, we collectively write all of our activators on paper so we can see the common threads in our struggles.

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## MODULE 7:

# Developing Our Solidarity Team & Weaving Our Wellness Basket

*In this 3-hour workshop, we continue our suicide prevention safety plans by developing our solidarity circle. Our solidarity circle is composed of the People we can go to during our howling at the moon moments. We also begin weaving our wellness basket to support balance in body, mind and spirit through working with cedar medicine.*

### DEVELOPING OUR SOLIDARITY TEAM

What are the signs to look for to know when you need to ask for help from our solidarity team? What tools are there to get you through times of crisis, and whom can you call on? Howl at the moon moments is when we are dysregulated and in our most profound spiritual and emotional pain and suffering. These are times when we feel like dying when we plan to die and start withdrawing from people (Reynolds, 2021).

These are the times we need mutual aid, & solidarity teams (Reynolds, 2021). We support

youth to develop their solidarity team and make agreements with these folks ahead of time for our howl-at-the-moon moments to support and help us stay alive through these moments of dysregulation.

What are the signs to look for to know when you need to ask for help from our solidarity team? What tools are there to get you through times of crisis, and whom can you call on? Howl at the moon moments is when we are dysregulated and in our most profound spiritual and emotional pain and suffering. These are times when we feel like dying when we plan to die and start withdrawing from people (Reynolds, 2021).

## **SIGNS WE NEED TO REACH OUT TO OUR SOLIDARITY TEAM**

If a youth is reaching out and sharing thoughts of suicide, this is a sign that they trust you and that they want support to live. It is a good thing. It is a relational act to connect to safe others. It reflects their desire to live and is a sign of health and a sign of life.

- Feelings Of Hopelessness
- Severe Sadness Or Moodiness
- Dangerous Or Self-Harming Behaviour (Substance Use)
- Looking For Ways To Take Your Life / Feeling Suicidal
- Major Life Crisis
- Withdrawal From People
- Changes In Appearance Or Personality
- Planning Your Suicide

## **ATTRIBUTES FOR SOLIDARITY TEAM MEMBERS**

- Non-Judgemental
- Understands Suicide
- Meet Us With Unconditional Positive Regard
- Hold Empathetic Space For Us
- Bear Witness To Our Suffering With Love & Compassion
- Help Us Not To Feel So Alone
- Support us to feel grounded again through co-regulation

## **STATEMENTS TO STAY AWAY FROM**

We want to encourage youth to avoid reaching out to folks who respond to us when we are in our most profound spiritual suffering by responding in the following ways. These responses tend to make things worse and compound our struggle:

### **“It is not that bad.”**

This invalidates a person’s feelings and minimizes what they are going through

### **“I know how you feel.”**

This is making the conversation about you. There is no way for us to know how someone feels when feeling suicidal.

### **“You have so much to live for.”**

When we are dysregulated, we are not in a place to be counting our blessings. That part of the brain is offline and inaccessible in these moments.

### **“Other People have it much worse. You are being selfish.”**

Comparing a person’s suffering to others is not helpful. Again that part of the brain is not accessible to us in these moments. We need to feel seen, heard and unconditionally supported.

## **STATEMENTS TO STEER TOWARDS**

### **“I see you”**

### **“I am with you”**

### **“You matter”**

**What keeps you here? What keeps you living?** (this can help with identifying supports and resources)

### **“I am here to help. How can I help?”**

Ask them to share if there was a specific incident that led to suicidal thoughts - **“what happened ? I want to hear more. I am here for you. You are not alone”**

Encourage the youth to describe what they are feeling - **“I had no idea you were feeling this way. You can talk to me about what’s happening. I want to be here for you.”**



### **JOURNAL PROMPT**

Once we develop our solidarity team, we are responsible for making agreements with these folks ahead of time for our howling-at-the-moon moments. We ask them if they are willing to be there for us when the spirit of suicide visits us. We ask for support to help us stay alive through these moments of dysregulation.

***Invite youth to get into groups of 3 (try to have one facilitator present in each small group) and share about the People in their solidarity team. Then invite youth to write down in their journals which they will reach out to when the spirit of suicide visits them.***

### **WEAVING FOR OUR WELLNESS**

The invitation is for youth to weave a “Wellness Basket” for themselves. A basket that, when they look at it, they are reminded of their innate wisdom, beauty and Ancestral Strength, a basket that holds their hopes, dreams and goals for the future. Cedar can awaken our spirit and connect us to our Identity and Ancestors. The practice of weaving is also an essential part of wellness, as it brings us into something called a flow state. Csikszentmihalyi and Getzels (1970) introduced the concept of a flow state as a healing state. Folks living with the impacts of trauma can return to everyday life if they regularly engage in activities that bring them into a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Getzels, 1970).

The flow state occurs when we are fully absorbed in activities, losing track of time and forgetting about our thoughts and egos. Flow state is very similar to meditation. In both flow state and meditation, activity in the prefrontal cortex decreases and activity in the limbic system increases. The result of reduced activity in the prefrontal cortex and increased activity in the limbic system is an emotional experience of creativity and a healthier brain (Neubert, 2020).

The practitioner's appropriate balance of task difficulty and skill level, in this case, the weaver, is the main point to achieving the flow state (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi & Getzels, 1970). For example, as Csikszentmihalyi and Getzels (1970) illustrated, in challenging activities, the practitioner may experience frustration; however, specific and super easy activities may make participants bored. Both states cause loss of flow.

According to evidence reported by Neubert (2020), weaving appears to have this suitable balance. Therefore, it can be considered an appropriate task for the experience of flow state, but it should be applied regularly. When the practitioner increases the time of weaving each day, they can meaningfully experience positive changes in their thought patterns resulting in more calm and joyfulness.

It is crucial to consider no objective goals and accomplishments for weaving. It is recommended that the weaver take a deep breath, then start weaving to experience peace and integration with the body. Reviewing these thoughts can help our brains shape new neural pathways relating to ways of being. Supplementary to this, it is suggested to work in silence or listen to meditative music for at least half an hour during weaving (Neubert, 2020).

## PROCESSING CEDAR

As youth work with this medicine, remind them that this is a mindfulness practice. What we are thinking and feeling becomes imbued into medicine. Invitation to think about what wellness means and put all that love and good energy into their basket. This basket will hold all the positive thoughts, prayers and intentions for what they want for their life and wellness as they move through the world.

When youth look at their basket, it will remind them of who they are and where they come from and inspire them to keep doing all the things they need to thrive and be balanced in body, mind and spirit.

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## MODULE 8:

# New Strategies In Place Of Self Harm & Weaving Our Wellness Basket

*In this 3-hour workshop, we will continue our suicide prevention safety plans by exploring other ways of regulating our nervous system other than self-harm. We will look at how we can use the land, our culture, our breath and our bodies as tools for calming and grounding us during our howling at the moon moments. We will also be learning about the healing properties of cedar and beginning the process of weaving our wellness basket.*

### **DEVELOPING NEW STRATEGIES IN PLACE OF SELF HARM**

Self-harm is an attempt at self regulation. Through self-harm, we attempt to achieve regulation (relief or bringing our nervous system back down to baseline arousal levels). It releases our overwhelmed nervous system (Corrigan et al., 2011). But then we are often left with shame and isolation after self-harm, which is a dysregulating experience. We will explore new tools that will regulate our nervous system, help us to heal from

trauma, and not cause any harm to ourselves. We can utilize our breath, bodies, land, and culture and support nervous system regulation instead of harming ourselves. We will be offering land-based, culturally-rooted tools to utilize in place of self-harm.

It is a journey. Often a few steps forward and a few steps backward. It is essential to be gentle and empathic with ourselves if we fall. What is important is to keep getting back up and trying again.

### **PRACTICES FOR SELF REGULATION OTHER THAN SUBSTANCES & SELF HARM**

- Cold Water Immersion (spirit bath, cold water cleanse)
- Reaching out to someone in your solidarity circle to share what is upsetting you and receive connection and support
- Holding ice cubes in your hands
- Screaming into a pillow / Howling at the moon(or somewhere that will not scare anyone)
- Yoga
- Drumming or Singing
- Dancing

- Smudging / Prayer / Cedar Brushing / Eagle feather Brushing
- Running / Vigorous Exercise
- Meditation / Deep Belly Breathing
- Learning language

### **JOURNAL PROMPT OR GROUP BRAINSTORM**

Brainstorm other things we can do with the group on chart paper in place of self-harm, or an alternative option is for youth to write down the things they will do instead of self-harm in their journal.

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## MODULE 9:

# Drumming, Singing & Dancing As Medicine & Weaving Our Wellness Basket

*In week nine, we explore how we can utilize our culture, specifically drumming, singing and dancing, as tools for self-regulation, healing and support on our path of neuro-decolonization. Together, we learn communal songs and dances, celebrating who we are as Indigenous People through our culture. We then spend the last part of the session weaving our wellness baskets.*

### TEACHINGS ON COAST SALISH DANCING

Written by : Paula Charlie (Qu'yuptunaat)

It's important to remember that Salish Dance requires Salish singing(ers). Yes it is true - you can dance like nobody's watching. However, traditionally, our men are our main singers. Not only do our songs make our dancers come to life, they also tell a story. Unlike the English language, we use more sound than words. However, some songs do have Hul'qumi'num words. Often men will use drums and sometimes women will use a rattle.

Singing releases endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine – the 'happy' chemicals that boost your mood and make you feel good about yourself.

Scientists believe that's one of the reasons why people report being on a high during choir sessions and continuing to feel positive, uplifted, and motivated afterwards”(healthline.com 2020)

Both singing and dancing go hand in hand. When you are going through a healing process you may be doing it alone, but will need to reach out and form a group to bring your song/dance to life.

Take a walk in the woods or take your shoes off and let the waves of the ocean dance over your feet. Stand in the rain, open your heart and close your eyes. What do you hear? Cry if you need too. Then once you have caught your breath. Sing. Sing anything. You have the start of a song. You may need to record it to work on it some more.







The dances we currently use were handed down to us from our great grandparents. These songs and dances tell stories of our history amidst the land & animals. Special songs of Great beings that are no longer seen by the eyes of man. These songs and dances allow our children/people to feel great pride in being Hwulmuhw mustimuhw (indigenous people).

## NEUROSCIENCE OF DANCING

Indigenous Dancing is incredibly beneficial for trauma recovery as we have to simultaneously use both the right and left sides of our brain, activating bilateral stimulation (Basso et al., 2021). Dancing has been proven effective in treating depression (Karkou et al., 2019). For youth navigating the spirit of suicide, depression is almost always present, so treating depression is a helpful suicide prevention strategy. Dancing integrates our emotional, spiritual and cognitive (thinking) selves. Neuroscience literature highlights how dancing engages a dynamic network of brain regions responsible for cognitive, social, emotional, rhythmic, and creative functioning, which positively affect emotion regulation (Basso et al., 2021). Emotion regulation is significant for trauma recovery as it gives us a sense of agency to help ourselves during times of stress.

Weare (2020) declared that dancing in a group setting can help to:

- socially engage with People and integrate into the community (activate social engagement system)
- nonverbal expression of our emotional and creative selves
- build self-esteem and awareness of our body
- release tension, build muscle coordination and expand our ability to move
- find enjoyment through relaxation

## TEACHINGS ON COAST SALISH DRUMMING & SINGING

Written by : Tsumqwatuns  
(Lawrence Mitchell)

When humans came into this world it was already in harmony, for as far as the eye could see were the brightest stars, the cleanest waters, the freshest air, and there was abundance beyond measure from land beings to ocean beings to river beings or the air beings.

Every being had its own sacred purpose, given to them by the great spirit that flows through all things, some were chosen to give air, some were put here to heal, some were to inspire beauty and some were chosen to give life. For those that sacrificed their lives we exemplified the deepest respect through our thoughts and prayers, by composing songs, by hosting ceremonies, and also by utilizing every part of its being. Nothing of its sacrifice would go to waste, and what wasn't used was returned back to where it came from.

Before we even begin the hunt we send out our shqwaluwun and exercise the teachings to tell the world around us that we need help. The haputh (deer) is one such relation to come forward and give its life as a gift to us humans. It is embedded within the DNA of the haputh to exercise this level of sacrifice, and it does so without a second thought, because it is the highest honour to give yourself for something greater than you can imagine.

We as humans have to exercise the teachings also and we have a sacred obligation to the haputh because it saved our lives. We use the hul'q'umi'num' language, our energy, thoughts, and prayers during the entire drum making process in order to transform it from the physical being it once was to its new life as a spiritual helper.

Upon completion we apply ourselves fully and wholeheartedly, giving our very greatest of intentions, so much so that we become one with

the drum. It becomes an extension of our very being, nourishing the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual parts of our selves, giving us strength, telling our stories, releasing our tears, unwinding our frustrations, it connects us to our ancestors, and allows us to touch the earth. It becomes magic, teaching us about all the wonders of the world around us, but more importantly we learn about the world inside of us.

In regards to songs you must know that every song has its own purpose, its own life, its own energy and tells a story. Songs are given to us humans as a way to facilitate a deeper connection with the world around us, seen and unseen. The pulsating of the drum, combined with our voice and our spirit energy it vibrates through our entire being, to every cell in our body, opening us up to all that is sacred in life.

But also we must remember that songs have teachings, and also property rights, which we must respect. Some are personal, some are communal, some are ceremonial, and some are universal. You can't just go singing a song because you like it. Always ask questions, listen with your heart, and believe in the power of your voice, it matters and you matter.

## **NEUROSCIENCE OF DRUMMING & SINGING**

Drumming and singing can be utilized as a tool for self-regulation, as it moves us into the part of our nervous system where healing and feelings of safety and connection occur, which is in the ventral vagal (Schwartz, 2019). Singing vibrates the larynx, which activates our vagus nerve (Berthoud & Neuherber, 2000; Jotz et al., 2011). Activating this nerve is important because it turns on our parasympathetic nervous system, our body's natural calming response, and acts as an antidote to being in dorsal vagal or sympathetic activation. Sympathetic activation (fight/flight) is a chronic nervous system trauma response due to the trauma associated with ongoing colonial genocide.

According to Van der Kolk (2002), drumming can put trauma survivors in rhythm with others, which can help them to overcome the frozen sense of separation. Drumming is a well-known instrument used to gather People, facilitate communication, and transport them to a spiritual field to calm anxiety. Drumming, as creative therapy, can result in therapeutic attunement through an embodied awareness of rhythmic flow and the mutual connection occurring during the intense process of deep listening, kinesthetic awareness, and deep attention to what is happening in the moment (Kossak, 2008).

Neuroscience has shown us that rhythmic music can positively affect the limbic system, including the amygdala, hippocampus, hypothalamus, and brain stem, which are involved in processing and treating trauma. Drumming can decrease hypersensitivity, impulsivity, and anxiety-related problems by influencing the brainstem. In other words, drumming can help to realign brain stem activity, resulting in less anxiety and improved emotional regulation. For example, in People who struggle with emotion regulation, which is most of us trauma survivors, the limbic system becomes over-sensitized to perceptions of threat. The limbic system is formed in utero, under the sensory stimulus of the mother's heartbeat and can be stabilized by exposure to rhythms at the same tempo, which is 80 to 100 bpm (Perry, 2006). This explains why drumming or listening to drumming usually creates a sense of calm for folks.

One of the main struggles of People who have experienced trauma is difficulties in making personal relationships. Porges (2007) stated how trauma could negatively affect the nervous system by increasing threat perceptions and reducing social engagement. However, group drumming can provide a sense of connection and belonging and offer a safe platform for examining and practicing other skills needed to develop healthy and supportive relationships.

Group Drumming can lead to improved social and health outcomes in several possible ways:

- It has a calming influence on participants (Winkelman, 2003)
- Reducing stress levels (Friedman, 2000)
- Induce positive feelings in individuals, helping them feel they “fit in” without tolerating the stigma of more overt therapy (Ho et al., 2011).
- Provide participants with a sense of group identity and group cohesion (Longhofer &

Floersch, 1993)

- Positive socialization (Kalani, 2005)
- Experiences of accomplishment (Longhofer & Floersch, 1993)
- Drumming-based interventions in school can significantly reduce internalizing problems, withdrawal/depression, attention problems, anxiety problems, attention deficit/hyperactivity problems, oppositional defiant problems, and post-traumatic stress problems (Ho et al., 2011)

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## MODULE 10 :

# Cold Water Cleanse

*In week 10, we awaken our spirits on the Land by engaging in a k<sup>w</sup>esa (cold water cleanse ceremony). Cold water bathing can be done in a river, ocean, lake or even in your shower if you can not access a natural body of water. For this initiative, we encourage facilitators to find a body of water that is relatively private, a place where the youth can connect to one another and the Land in a way that feels safe.*

### TEACHINGS ON COLD WATER CLEANSING

Written By : Steven Recalma - (Məlidas)

Cold water cleansing provides many benefits for indigenous peoples. Not only is it extremely healing, but also an incredibly powerful ceremony. This is a ceremony that you can practice at any stage of your life, there are ways to make this accessible to all bodies. Where we can utilize the tools creation has provided for us to heal, let go, reconnect, replenish, and help nourish our spirits.

When we go to the water with the intention of cleansing our body, mind, and spirit, not only are we connecting with the waters, but we're also reconnecting with our ancestors. We use this time and space when we are seeking guidance or direction from the world around us. Before we go for our cleanse, we seek out knowledge of a safe spot along the river away from the general public. Sometimes it can feel better going alone, but there are times when it might be better to go with someone you feel safe or connected with for

safety reasons. If you do go alone, always make sure someone knows where you are and when you'll be back.

Depending on which territory you're in or which nation you're from, this ceremony can be done differently. The best time for baths is at day break, and not to go past late afternoon (past 3pm).

When we get to the water, we speak to it, and ask permission to utilize its healing properties. We tell the water who we are and to wash away anything negative within us that's no longer serving our spirit.

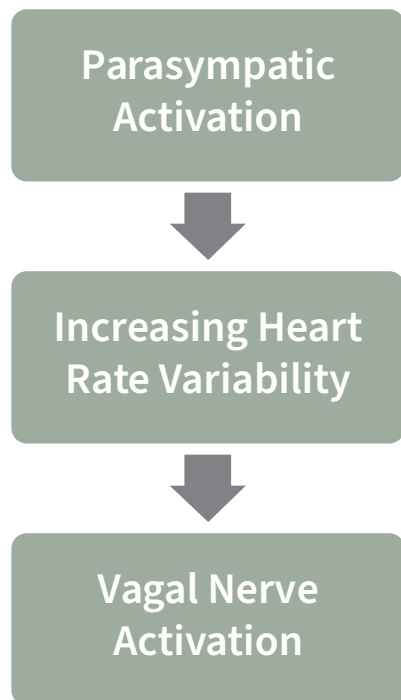
We walk into the water, facing upstream and our back facing downstream. We dunk in sets of four times, honoring the four directions. Starting off at four, do as many as feels right. Allowing our bodies to use the water to shock our system, refilling us with powerful intentions of healing, guidance, emotions, and to wash away anything negative downstream. These tools are available for us to use and all they ask for is time.





## NEUROSCIENCE OF COLD WATER SUBMERSION

Submerging ourselves into cold water activates the parasympathetic nervous system (Yuen & Sander, 2017) and increases heart rate variability, an indicator of vagus nerve stimulation (Mäkinen et al., 2008). In other words, decreased HRV is caused by the poor vagal parasympathetic tone, and it will lead to a wide range of psychological conditions, such as depression and anxiety (McLaughlin et al., 2015), which are associated with the risk of suicidal attempts (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Therefore, to prevent suicide attempts, one of the best solutions is activating the vagal nerve through cold water cleansing. The following graph illustrates the effect of cold water on the central nervous system and the activation of the vagal nerve as a consequence.



Submerging ourselves in cold water also decreases cortisol (stress hormone), increases serotonin and dopamine (feel-good chemicals) and increases our stress tolerance (He et al., 2012).

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLEANSING CEREMONY (KWAKWAKA'WAKW)

Teachings shared by Shannon Alfred

### Water Cleansing Ceremony

1. Before going in the water, stand at the edge, take a few deep breaths to clear your mind and when ready, **Introduce yourself** to the spirit of the water, either by your traditional name or English name and then...
2. **State your intention** for the water cleansing ceremony (it is to release negativity, ask for cleansing of your spirit, ask for blessings, etc.). When you are ready, do a complete turn to the left before entering the water.
3. Stand in the direction when first entering the water to **give thanks** to the Creator for this day and for your well-being. Depending on how far you go in, either emerge into the water, cup water into your hands to wash your face, or raise your hands in prayer & Gratitude
4. Quarter turn to the left. In this direction, ask for the **release** of all things that no longer serves a purpose that you have been carrying in your body, to release all negativity, negative intrusions, stress, hurts, pains, tears, fear, anger and so forth. **Note:** do not turn until you feel you have released all that needs to be released, especially if you are releasing tears. And again, depending on how far you go in, either emerge into the water, cup water into your hands to wash your face, or raise your hands in prayer and Gratitude.
5. Quarter turn to the left again (**facing land**): This is where you **offer all your prayers to loved ones** living on land that requires prayers. And again, depending on how far you go in, either emerge into the water, cup water into your hands to wash your face, or raise your hands in prayer and Gratitude.

6. Quarter turn to the left again: This is where you ask the spirit of the water to **re-energize your spirit** so that you may continue to walk forward in this life with the gifts you carry. Ask in prayer for all positive things, such as strength, courage, confidence, and so forth. And again, depending on how far you go in, either emerge into the water, cup water into your hands to wash your face, or raise your hands in prayer and Gratitude.
7. Quarter turn to the direction you started when you first entered the water. Take a moment to tune in to how you are feeling and to **express your Gratitude and appreciation from your heart** for what has been gifted to you through the water ceremony. Turn to the left and exit the water.

Sometimes, depending on your spirit, you may feel you want to stay in the water a little longer. Go with that because something else may be given or shared with you from the spirit of the water or the ancestors. Or it could be that you appreciate the experience and want to embrace the feeling a bit longer.

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## MODULE 11:

# Blanketing Ceremony & Trauma Informed Yoga Practice

*For the final session of the 11-week program, we honour the youth with a blanketing ceremony, wrapping them in protection and love for their wellness journey ahead. This final session celebrates the youth for their courage, dedication and commitment to completing the 11-week cohort. We also engage in our final Kwakwaka'wakw-infused trauma-informed yoga practice.*

### TEACHINGS ON THE BLANKET CEREMONY

A blanketing ceremony is a way of honoring someone for their accomplishments or important life transitions. In Kwakwaka'wakw culture, blankets are wrapped around our babies during a Hilugwila ceremony, adoption, and the coming of age ceremony. Wrapping someone in a blanket shows our respect for those who have made an important contribution to our community.

Each of the youth completing this cohort has significantly contributed to the wellness of young People in our community. They are courageously

leading the way. The bravery, courage, authenticity, and vulnerability we witnessed in each of the youth is a blessing and gives us hope for the future of our young People. The youth are making their ancestors proud.

Youth can be drummed in and invited to stand on a sacred item (Bear hide, cedar boughs, etc.) to connect to the power of their culture and connection to their Ancestors. Each youth is blanketed and gifted unique gifts to help them on their journey forward. All facilitators can share words about the gifts and strengths that are seen in them. Youth also have a chance to share words about how the ceremony felt for them.









## GUIDED MEDITATION FOR OUR LAST SESSION TOGETHER

Written by: Gail Peekeboot,  
adapted by Avis O'Brien

As our time in this circle comes to a close, we are going to take a few minutes to do a guided meditation to honour our time together.

I invite you to close your eyes and take four deep nourishing breaths. Connecting to our sacred breath of life that carries us on our path. Remembering our breath is a resource that can help to bring calmness and grounding.

Invitation to see yourself standing on a gentle grassy slope. Feel the sun and breeze on your face. Hear the sound of birds and quietly flowing water from a nearby river. Invitation to Keep breathing deeply. Smell the grass and earth and flowers.

Looking down, you see 11 stone steps. One for each week of our group.

1. Step down onto the first stone. Feel its warmth. Know it will hold you safely. Hast'ax'id (breathe in)... Hast'axo (breath out)...
2. Remember that you can soothe yourself anytime by tapping, breathing, being on the land or engaging in your culture. Hast'ax'id ... Hast'axo...
3. Become more aware of being in your body and noticing your feelings. Hast'ax'id .... Hast'axo.....
4. As you step onto this stone you become more aware of the strength of others in our group. Hast'ax'id .... Hast'axo.....
5. Notice how it feels to speak from your heart, your Inner Being, your true self, instead of your mind or story. Hast'ax'id .... Hast'axo.....
6. Remember how it feels to listen to others with your heart, your Inner Being. Hast'ax'id .... Hast'axo.....

7. Savor the feeling of having others listen to you with their hearts and tune in to what it was like to be in this group and feel seen, heard and supported through your struggle. Hast'ax'id .... Hast'axo.....
8. Remember you have the choice to reach out to your solidarity circle when the spirit of suicide is visiting you. Hast'ax'id .... Hast'axo.....
9. Experience deepening compassion for the others in the group. Hast'ax'id .... Hast'axo...
10. Be aware of a growing self-compassion. Hast'ax'id .... Hast'axo...
11. With your eyes still closed, look around and see everyone in the group standing together. We have all come to this place along our paths. Look up and see how far we have come together. As this group is coming to a close ... Hast'ax'id ... Hast'axo...

### RAIN

Recognize any feelings you are holding.

Allow those feelings in.

Investigate those feelings with gentle kindness.

Nurture: How will you care for yourself and your feelings which are beautiful messengers?





### PART 3:

# dxʷdəwucid/dxʷstəgʷaḳʷ ləšucid Language Reclamation

By Kirsten Dobler

It is essential to understand how our language was stolen as we begin to reclaim it. There can be much shame in not knowing or speaking our languages. It is important to emphasize that this shame was put onto us, our parents, our grandparents, and all of our ancestors impacted by colonization. Sometimes our feelings towards language loss can be directed at our families. The language loss that we are faced with is a result of colonization. If your family has lost their language, it was a measure of protection - to protect themselves and their family members from many kinds of abuse. When we come from families with very little or no language knowledge, they have done what they could to protect us. Now we are entering a space where we can take up the responsibility of learning for future generations.

It is crucial to know that we all belong, and you have always belonged. In the history of colonization, language loss was a tool to rip us apart from our relatives. When our ancestors were stolen from their families and forced to learn English, the government and churches shamed them for

speaking our language. This made it so the young People could not speak with the older adults, which took away from our teachings. However, there is so much knowledge woven into our language that the church and the government did not succeed in many ways. As you become more fluent as second-language dxʷdəwucid/dxʷstəgʷaḳʷ ləšucid speakers, you will be able to understand beyond the direct English translation and better understand how your ancestors understood the world. This will take time, but we must step into the responsibility of learning the language.

Also, learning the language is something that we are meant to do. As Coast Salish People, it is something that is within you. Although your most recent relatives may not have spoken about it, it is still something you carry, and I promise that it will fill you with all good feelings. It is not always easy, and there is a lot to learn but even being able to greet your relatives in the language is an act of joy and resistance. You belong here - we belong here together.



# Tips For Yoga Teachers & Language Teachers

All of our trauma informed yoga and movement practices are offered in correlation with Ancestral Language Reclamation. This offers youth the opportunity to explore safely connecting to their bodies, while hearing the language. This can provide a very powerful somatic experience for participants.

The yoga forms are translated into the language of the land in which the program is being delivered in, and then offered while participants are being invited into the forms

A positive connection and relationship between the language and yoga teacher is essential. It is like they are co regulating with each other while they lead youth through self regulation practices. We

encourage the language teacher and yoga teacher to meet prior and practice leading the flow before delivering it.

## **TIPS FOR THE LANGUAGE TEACHERS:**

Speak loudly so all youth can hear the translations.

Say the **dxʷdəwucid/dxʷstəgʷačʷ ləšucid** translation, followed by english, and repeat both two times.

## **TIPS FOR THE YOGA TEACHERS:**

Allow enough time between forms for the language teachers to offer the translations.

## LUSHOOTSEED TERMS & PHRASES

dx̣w dəwucid/dx̣w stəg̣w aq̣w ləšucid translations by: q̣w aʔələmu ʔuḳw alabəʔ ~ Nancy Jo Bob

### 10 WEEK COHORT

WEEK 1	Creating A Culture Of Belonging & Cedar Brushing	
	LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
	ʔal tə dišəʔ čəʔ ti ʔaciʔtalbix̣w swatix̣w təd ʔə tə dʔix̣w ʔaciʔtalbix̣w	We are on Coast Salish Land
	ʔudʔəʔqtubut ʔa ti swatix̣w təd	It's our turn to be on earth
	hawətubš	Thank you
	ʔəsʔub	Okay

WEEK 2	Suicidality As A Symptom Of Attempted & Ongoing Colonial Genocide	
	LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
	səsʔiči(l)	Feeling ashamed
	g̣wədʔadad	Teachings
	puspus	Aunties
	qəsqəsi	Uncles
	tulʔal čəd _____	I come from _____

WEEK 3	Impacts Of Trauma & How Yoga Can Help Us To Heal From Trauma	
	LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
	cəʔdalb ʔə həliʔ	Breath of life
	həliʔil	Getting better / healing
	lədx̣w čad čəx̣w	Where are you going?
	luudəx̣w	Listen
	hiḳw hiiṭxəč	Grateful
	ʔəshiḳw səshiiṭxəč čəd	I am feeling grateful
	səshiḳw cəb	Respect

WEEK 4	Creating Safety In Relationships / Polyvagal Theory
LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
bəkʷ dibət səsdəčəxʷ	We are all one
ʔuyayus čət ʔəsqʷuʔ ʔə tiit dəčuʔ	Working Together as one
yəlyəlab	Ancestors

WEEK 5	Impacts Of Trauma & How Yoga Can Help Us To Heal From Trauma
LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
dəčuʔ	One
saliʔ	Two
tiixʷ	Three
buus	Four
sḵʷədicut	Prayer
təs qʷuʔ tiitəb	Cold water cleanse
swatixʷtəd ti	The land
hikʷ xʷəlč ti	The ocean
ʔəsxid t(i) adsəli	How does your spirit feel?
ʔəsxid t(i) adstačigʷəd	How does your body feel?
ʔəsxid t(i) adsčəbqid	How does your brain feel?

WEEK 6	Identifying Our Activators & Trauma Informed Yoga Class
LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
suyabukʷtagʷəl	Fighting amongst each other (lateral violence)
słəkʷəb	Stick
čutay	Leaf
čəxəʔ	Rock
cətdalb	Breathe in
cətdalb	Breathe out

WEEK 7	Developing Our Solidarity Team & Weaving Our Wellness Basket	
	LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
	luudəxʷ	Listen
	Ꭰᓂluudəxʷ ᓂᓂ	I am listening
	Ꭰᓂluudəxʷ ᓂᓂ	I will listen
	səxə	Love
	suyiqid	Weaving (cedar)
	slagʷac	Red cedar bark
	slagʷac	Inner bark of red cedar
	xəpəyac	Cedar Tree
	stidigʷəd	Cedar Branch
	stidigʷəd	Needles of Cedar
	slagʷac	Cedar Bark Softened
	slagʷaculičəʔ	Cedar Blanket
	slagʷəd	Cedar Mat

WEEK 8	Solidarity Team & Weaving Our Wellness Basket	
	LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
	suyiqidačʰiʔ	Weaving Hands
	Ꭰᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂ	To strip cedar
	dəxʷəsəxəʔ Ꭰᓂᓂᓂᓂᓂ	Place where you go to strip cedar
	čəxəd tiit slagʷac	Splitting cedar bark apart
	suyiqib	Cedar Basket

WEEK 9	Drumming, Singing, Dancing As Medicine & Weaving Our Wellness Basket	
	LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
	təsulč ɣʷəl səxəb	Drum & Dance
	Ꭰᓂsəxəb ᓂᓂ	I am dancing
	Ꭰᓂsəxəb ᓂᓂ	We are dancing
	bəkʷ dibət Ꭰᓂsəxəb	We are all dancing
	jəšəpəšəd	Feet

LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION
sładaŷ səxəb	Ladies Dance
suhəliʔ ti dstačigʷəd	My body comes alive
pácut čəxʷ dxʷʔal suʔilib	Try to sing
sʔilib	Song
ʔilib	Sing
dxʷstəsəd	Drummer
təsulč	Drum
sutəsəd	Drumming

WEEK 10	Cold Water Cleanse Ceremony & Trauma Informed Yoga Class	
LUSHOOTSEED	MEANING / TRANSLATION	
ʔəs qʷuʔ ʔitəb (ʔitəb)	Cold Water Cleansing	
ləʔəʔ dxʷʔal hikʷ ʃwəlč dxʷʔal ʔəcə	Come to the ocean with me	
ʔəxʷʔitəb čəxʷ ʔu	Do you want to bathe?	
ʔəsʔaʃxʷ ti hikʷ ʃwəlč	The water is cold (ocean water)	
xʷiʔ ləkʷəd tiit adqələb ʔə kʷ(i) adsəč	Do not hold onto your bad feelings	
hawə čəd ʔə ti dyəʔyələb	I give thanks to my ancestors	
słʷədicut	Prayer	
sʔičəb	Blanket	
sʔaʔʔaʔ sʔqʷuʔalikʷ	Ceremony	
sjuʔil sʔqʷuʔalikʷ	Celebration	





## YOGA FORMS & DUWAMISH SOUTHERN LUSHOOTSEED TRANSLATIONS

Developed by: Ivy Richardson & Yola Willie

dxʷdəwucid/dxʷstəgʷaḡ ləšucid translations by: ḡʷatələmu ʔukʷalabət ~ Nancy Jo Bob

WEEK 5		
Trauma Informed Yoga Class   45 Min Class		
Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Standing Shoulder Movement	Stand - ʔəx̌ilč Shoulder - taləq	<p>A. Standing with feet together in Mountain pose, stretch the arms upwards inhaling.</p> <p>B. Exhaling bring arms to shoulder level.</p> <p>C. Inhale while there and as you exhale bring the arms down and back to Mountain.</p> <p>D. Repeat this for about 1 minute. Stretch and open the arms wide and feel the stretch to the tips of the fingers.</p>
Palm Tree Form	Sword Fern - šx̌aḡəlč Tree - čəbid	<p>A. Bring arms above your head while standing in Palm tree form, as you inhale.</p> <p>B. Interlocked hands while the palms face upwards.</p> <p>C. Stay for 30 seconds here and then release exhaling, bringing the arms down.</p> <p>D. Repeat this 2 times.</p>
Palm Tree Form Side Bend	Sword Fern - šx̌aḡəlč Tree - čəbid Left side of body - qəlaligʷəd Right side of body - dʔəhaligʷəd	<p>A. From Palm Tree form, bring the stretched interlocked arms towards the side, in a side bend.</p> <p>B. Exhale as you stretch towards one side, coming back to the center and then going towards the other side.</p> <p>C. Feel the stretch at the lower back sides close to the hips and the diaphragm.</p> <p>D. Repeat on both sides 2 times each.</p>
Hands Bound Rising Locust Form	Hands - čaʔčələš To go up - dxʷšəq	<p>A. Releasing from palm tree form, continue with the stretch. While interlocking the hands behind, exhale and stretch the arms pulling downwards while expanding the chest and throwing the neck down behind.</p> <p>B. Here in hands bound rising locust form, stretch down completely from the upper back, shoulders, arms and neck.</p>

continued on next page ►

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
		<p>A. Exhale and use the breathing to go deeper in the stretch.</p> <p>B. Release and repeat 2 times.</p>
Standing Hip Circles	<p>Stand with hands on hips -  ḵəḵilč dxḵḵal  čalčaləš ʔal tə sʔilaləp</p> <p>Turn in circles - dʔaldʔalacut</p>	<p>A. Release from hands bound rising locust form.</p> <p>B. Stand with feet apart and do the Pelvic Circles, rotating from right to left 4 times and then left to right 4 times.</p> <p>C. This stretch helps to release stiff lower back while also working on opening the hamstrings.</p> <p>D. Exhale as you take the hips backwards and inhale coming towards the front. Let the movement be slow and full.</p>
Standing Wind Release Form	<p>Stand - ḵəḵilč</p> <p>Wind (physical wind) - šəḵḵəb</p> <p>To blow - pusud</p> <p>To wind (twist) - čəlpəd</p>	<p>A. Standing back in Mountain form, raise one leg and press the knee towards the chest.</p> <p>B. Exhale and press the thighs as much as possible towards the chest and the tummy to open the gluteus maximus and the hamstrings.</p> <p>C. Stay for 15 seconds each leg.</p>
Standing Quad Stretch Form	<p>Stand - ḵəḵilč</p> <p>Leg, foot - jəšəd</p>	<p>A. Reverse the movement of the leg and this time take the feet behind you, pressing the soles and the toes in standing quad stretch form.</p> <p>B. Again this yoga form opens the quads, the ankles, the feet and the toes.</p> <p>C. Stay for 15 seconds on each leg and repeat 2 times.</p> <p>D. Exhale and press deeper towards your hips.</p>
Standing Squat Form Hands Crossed In Front	<p>Stand - ḵəḵilč</p> <p>To bend down or over - tudʔildxḵḵ</p>	<p>A. Moving from the upper and lower body to the hips now.</p> <p>B. Here in standing squat form hands crossed in front, use the movement of the hips efficiently. Exhale and go down carefully.</p> <p>C. Feel the stretch at the knees and don't put pressure beyond the required physical strength. Squat keeping the hips at the center, and bring focus to the movement of the hip joints.</p> <p>D. Stay for 30 seconds.</p>

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Standing Side Lunge Form Hands On Hips	Stand with hands on hips - ʔəxʷilč dxʷʔal čalčaləš ʔal tə sʔilaləp Leg, foot - jəšəd To bend down/over - tudʔildxʷ	A. Moving from the upper and lower body to the hips now. B. Here in standing squat form hands crossed in front, use the movement of the hips efficiently. Exhale and go down carefully. C. Feel the stretch at the knees and don't put pressure beyond the required physical strength. Squat keeping the hips at the center, and bring focus to the movement of the hip joints. D. Stay for 30 seconds.
Half Forward Fold Hands On Back	To bend over - tudʔildxʷ Hands - čalčaləš Back - sčəlič	A. Starting in Mountain form hinge at the hips with hands on lower back. B. Go as far as your body needs to feel a deep stretch in your hamstrings and gluteus maximus muscles. C. So while you connect here, remain in this posture for 30 seconds, release and go again. D. Exhale and go in the forward bend, inhaling to come up.
Easy Form Neck Rotation	Easy (to do) - qiqiyəʔ Neck - cəqəpsəb Turn in circles - dʔaldʔalacut	A. Sitting comfortably in easy form, do the neck rotations. B. Go slow and deep, without letting go of the control of the movement. Flexing the neck releases tensions around the upper back and the cervical and helps to reduce dizziness and heaviness in the head. C. 2 rounds each way- clockwise and counterclockwise.
Easy Form Variation Side Bend	Easy (to do) - qiqiyəʔ Left side of body - qəlaligʷəd Right side of body - dʔəhaligʷəd	A. Extend the arms above while placing the other towards the side on the floor in easy form variation side bend. B. This stretch also helps to increase breathing at the diaphragm. C. Stretch exhaling and twist the neck and the upper chest for 15 seconds on each side and repeat 2 rounds.
Seated Torso Circles	To sit down - gʷədil Body - stačigʷəd Turn in circles - dʔaldʔalacut	A. Moving in circles in Seated Torso Circles, going clockwise and counterclockwise for 30 seconds in each direction. B. Exhaling going and pressing down and inhaling taking the torso behind and sideways.

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Cosmic Egg	Sky or above - ሻጃጃጃ Eggs - ጎጃጃጃ To hug - ጃጃጃጃጃጃ Knee - ሻጃጃጃጃጃጃ	A. From a seated position bring the knees in towards the chest and wrap the arms around the knees. B. Hold this form for 30 seconds, keep the breathing smooth to help you hold balance.
Seated Cat Cow	To sit down - ጎጃጃጃጃ Cat - ጃጃጃጃጃ Cow - ጃጃጃጃ	A. Inhale stretch inwards with the lower back and outwards to the chest. Exhale and curl outwards at the lower back and inwards at the chest. B. A simple yet effective practice to bring awareness and open the entire back. C. Do this for 1 minute, rest and repeat again for 1 more minute.
Firelog Form Variation	Firewood- ጃጃጃጃ Knee - ሻጃጃጃጃጃጃ Bounce or skip - ጃጃጃጃጃጃ Ankle - ሻጃጃጃጃጃጃ Turn in circles - ጃጃጃጃጃጃጃጃጃ	A. Release and sit with the legs stretched out in front of you. B. Bend one leg and place the foot over the other knee to sit in firelog form variation. C. While seated here, push the knees towards the floor gently while bouncing it. This will help to open the hips and the hamstrings. D. Also rotate the ankles with the folded leg moving it both clockwise and counterclockwise. E. Do this for 15 seconds with each foot and knee and repeat.
Cradle Form Straight Leg	Cradle (hold foot) - ጃጃጃጃጃጃ Leg/foot - ጃጃጃጃ Chest - ሻጃጃጃጃጃጃ	A. While the leg is folded, lift it and press the thighs and the shins towards your chest while holding the leg in your arms in cradle form straight leg. B. Pressing the thigh towards your chest while exhaling opens the hamstrings and the gluteus maximus. C. Hold for 30 seconds.
Revolved Staff Form	Legs out (from bent position) to stretch - ጃጃጃጃጃጃጃ Tall - ጃጃጃጃ To twist - ጃጃጃጃጃጃ	A. Extend the legs fully out and come into a tall seat. Place one hand on an opposite leg and twist to the direction of that leg. Your other arm will follow the twist extending out. B. Hold for 15 seconds on each side.



Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Child Form	Children - wiw̓su To stretch - taʔabac Or to something - taʔad	A. Coming on the shins and the knees, place the hips on 'the heels. B. Placing the hands on the heels, exhale to stretch moving forward to go in child form. C. Go gentle and slow with the stretch and as you exhale. D. Stay for 30 seconds
Thread The Needle Form	Thread - səxʷp̓ac̓ Sewing needle - p̓ačtəd Hand - čaləš Put under something - ʔəpabac	A. From child form, move the body a little ahead on the floor. B. Then bring the left arm from the floor towards the right side twisting the chest and the shoulders. C. Stretch taking the left arm in threading the needle form, and keep the right palm on the floor while twisting the neck to look towards the right. D. Stay here for about 15 seconds, release to repeat the other side. The stretch opens the shoulders and the chest to help maximize intake of oxygen.
Striking Cobra Form	Drum/strike - təsəd Snake - bəčəc Children - wiw̓su	A. In a flow from child form take the body as you inhale in Cobra Pose, stretching the lower back and the shoulders slowly. B. Exhale out completely in the stretch and inhale again and as you exhale go back to child form. So the flow is child's form-Cobra form-child's form-cobra-form-child's form (do this in 4 rounds with breathing). C. In each round open the lower back taking it deeper in the back bend.
One Legged Bow Form Preparation	Bow - q̓əčic To bend knee - ʔəspuy̓ t(i) adsəxʷqəp̓ucid Ankle - swacqʷuʂəd	A. Releasing from the flow above, stretch the body in prone completely, placing the face down on the mat. B. Bending one leg at the knee, hold the ankles to go into one legged bow form prep. Exhale and press the foot closer, flexing the hips and the leg. C. Stretches the quads, hamstrings and the gluteus. D. Remain for 15 seconds with each leg. Release to repeat with both legs again.

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Half Wind Release Form	Wind - ሕጻንግጽ To let go of something you were holding - ግጽግጽ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. While in supine, stretch the legs out &amp; relax taking deep rounds of breathing.</li> <li>B. Inhale and bend the left leg and press the left knee towards the chest in half wind release form.</li> <li>C. Exhale and press the thighs towards the chest and the abdomen to feel the deep stretch in the upper quads and the abdomen.</li> <li>D. Stay for 15 seconds with each leg.</li> </ul>
Happy Baby Form	Feeling good - ግጽግጽ Feeling happy - ግጽግጽ Happy - ከሕጻን Baby- ከሕጻን	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. From half wind release form bring both the legs to bend at the knee.</li> <li>B. Inhale and lift the legs up and as you exhale, press the thighs close to the chest while holding the toes in happy baby form.</li> <li>C. A great pose to feel the hamstring and open the hips.</li> <li>D. Exhale and press deeper towards you. Stay for 30 seconds closing your eyes, release and repeat again for 30 seconds.</li> </ul>
Supine Windshield Wiper Twist Form	Lying on your back on a flat surface inside a house - ግጽግጽ ሕጻን ግጽግጽ ግጽግጽ ሕጻን Lying on your back on ground - ግጽግጽ ሕጻን ግጽግጽ ግጽግጽ ሕጻን To twist - ሕጻንግጽ Feet (legs) - ግጽግጽ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Releasing from raised legs form, place the feet on the floor and relax.</li> <li>B. Exhale and place the knees on the floor towards your right side slightly twisting the hips and the thighs in supine windshield wiper twist form.</li> <li>C. Stay on each side for 15 seconds and repeat again.</li> </ul>
Wind Release Form Exhale Inhale Form	Wind - ሕጻንግጽ To let go of something you were holding - ግጽግጽ Breathing - ሕጻንግጽ Start breathing - ሕጻንግጽ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Ending it with the practice of wind release form in a flow.</li> <li>B. Inhale bring the thighs away from the body-exhale bring the thighs towards the chest-inhale bring the thighs away from the chest-exhale bring the thighs towards the chest.</li> <li>C. Repeat this 6 times for up to 2 minutes.</li> </ul>

WEEK 6	Identifying Our Activators & Trauma Informed Yoga Class   45 Min Class	
Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Revolved Bound Angle Form	To twist - čəlpcut	<p>A. Seated with the soles of your feet together, take a few breaths and bring awareness of the body keeping the spine straight.</p> <p>B. Inhale and raise the entire body upwards and turn towards the left placing the right hand on the left knee and the left hand on the floor behind you. Exhale completely here and look behind you while you turn.</p> <p>C. With every exhalation take the shoulders and neck backwards feeling the tension at the neck and upper back. Remain here for about 6 breaths. Repeat on the opposite side.</p>
Easy Form Neck Rotations	<p>Easy (to do) - qiqiyəʔ</p> <p>Neck - cəqəpsəb</p> <p>Turn in circles - dʔaldʔalacut</p>	<p>A. Sitting comfortably in easy form, do the neck rotations.</p> <p>B. Go slow and deep, without letting go of the control of the movement. Flexing the neck releases tensions around the upper back and the cervical and helps to reduce dizziness and heaviness in the head.</p> <p>C. 2 rounds each way- clockwise and counterclockwise.</p>
Seated Shoulder Rolls	<p>To sit down - gʷədil</p> <p>Shoulder - taləq</p> <p>Turn in circles - dʔaldʔalacut</p>	<p>A. Raise the spine and begin rotating the shoulders clockwise taking the stretch deep upwards and deep downwards. Watch the movement of the shoulder blades as you do this and try and bring them together when the shoulders contract.</p> <p>B. Take the shoulder rotation for about two rounds in clockwise direction for 4 breaths. Inhale as you go up and exhale as the shoulders contracts.</p> <p>C. Release and bring the movement anti clockwise for about two rounds for 4 breaths.</p> <p>D. Make sure the head is straight and so is the spine. E. Release the rotation and move the head sideways to the left and sideways to the right to remove further stiffness around the shoulders and neck.</p>

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Seated Cat Cow Form	To sit down - ግጃጃጃ Cat - ፒፒፒፒፒ	<p>A. Inhale stretch inwards with the lower back and outwards to the chest. Exhale and curl outwards at the lower back and inwards at the chest.</p> <p>B. A simple yet effective practice to bring awareness and open the entire back.</p> <p>C. Do this for 1 minute, rest and repeat again for 1 more minute.</p>
Easy Form Variation Side Bend	Easy (to do) - ግግግግግግ Left side of body - ግግግግግግግግ Right side of body - ግግግግግግግግግ Bend (self) - ፒፒፒፒፒ	<p>A. Extend the arms above while placing the other towards the side on the floor in easy form variation side bend.</p> <p>B. This stretch also helps to increase breathing at the diaphragm.</p> <p>C. Stretch exhaling and twist the neck and the upper chest for 15 seconds on each side and repeat 2 rounds.</p>
Easy Form Raised Arms	Easy (to do) - ግግግግግግ To go up - ግግግግግግግ Hands - ርግግግግግግ	<p>A. Seated in easy form, keep the back straight and chin and jaw at 90 degrees to the chest.</p> <p>B. Inhale and raise the arms above your head upwards and bring the fingers interlocked and stretch the elbows and shoulder with exhalation.</p> <p>C. Feel the stretch at the neck and shoulders and as you exhale take the arms higher upwards and keep the hip and spine straight.</p> <p>D. Stay at this stretch for about 8 breaths.</p>
Easy Form Side Bend	Easy (to do) - ግግግግግግ Left side of body - ግግግግግግግግ Right side of body - ግግግግግግግግግ Bend (self) - ፒፒፒፒፒ	<p>A. With arms raised in easy form raised arms, take the interlocked palms and as you exhale, bend the hip towards the left and stretch the upper body towards the left.</p> <p>B. Place the glutes firm on the floor and only take the upper body sideways along with the arms and feel the stretch.</p> <p>C. With every exhalation take the stretch deeper and remain here for about 8 breaths.</p> <p>D. Release and come to the center and expand the spine up and relax the shoulders.</p> <p>E. Repeat on the other side.</p>

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Twisted Form	<p>To twist - čəlpəcut</p> <p>To stretch body - taʔabac</p> <p>To stretch foot/leg - taʔšəd</p>	<p>A. Stretch the legs out from easy form, and bring the body to staff form and keeping the back straight breathe a few times.</p> <p>B. Now as you inhale, bend the right leg at the knee and bring the right foot and place it on the floor close to the outside of the left knee.</p> <p>C. Inhale again and place the left elbow around the outside of the right knee and try and hold the right foot bringing a twist to the hip towards the right and place the right palm on the floor behind you close to the buttocks. Exhale completely as you twist.</p> <p>D. If the left elbow is not flexible enough, then place the elbow around the right knee and grab it into your elbow pressing the knee and the thigh close to your chest.</p> <p>E. With every exhalation the stretch goes deeper with the shoulders and head turned backwards towards the right twisting at the hip.</p> <p>F. Repeat on the other side.</p>
Head To Knee Form	<p>Head - sʰayus</p> <p>Knee - səxʷqəpucid</p> <p>To stretch body - taʔabac</p> <p>To stretch foot/leg - taʔšəd</p>	<p>A. Bring the body into staff form and stretch both the legs out and spine straight and upwards.</p> <p>B. Folding the right leg at the knee, bring the right foot and place it on the inside of your thigh. With arms raised above the shoulders inhale and stretch the spine and bring the upper body downwards bending at the hip and reach with the arms for the left foot. Exhale completely and pushing the tummy in bring the chest close to the thighs and place the forehead on the knee.</p> <p>C. Take the body forward while remaining comfortable and feel the stretch at the shoulders, neck, arms and left leg.</p> <p>D. Try and remain here for about 6 breaths if possible.</p> <p>E. With every exhalation take the spine forward and stretch the arms.</p> <p>F. Release form and repeat on the other side.</p>



Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Thread The Needle Form	<p>Thread - səḥḥḥḥ</p> <p>Sewing needle- ḥəḥḥḥ</p> <p>Hand - ʕaləḥ</p> <p>Put under something - ḥəḥḥ</p>	<p>A. Find your table top form to start.</p> <p>B. Inhale and raise the left palm from the floor and bring the arm twisting the shoulders towards the right and place it on the floor palms facing upwards towards the right side taking it from below the left arm. Exhale completely here and place the left cheeks on the floor feeling the twist at the neck and the shoulders.</p> <p>C. Feel the stretch at the neck and take the arms stretched out further towards the right making sure the left palm is firm on the floor.</p> <p>D. Here the hips too would be twisted making sure the stretch is felt at the entire back thus working towards a flexible back and strong neck.</p> <p>E. Remain here for about 6 breaths and make sure the left cheeks is comfortable on the floor.</p> <p>F. Release the pose and bring the arms back by placing the left palm on the floor and look up. Repeat on the other side</p>
Crocodile Form On Elbows	<p>Big/large - hikḥ</p> <p>Salamander - ḥḥḥḥḥḥ</p> <p>Elbow - qḥəḥḥḥḥḥ</p>	<p>A. From the table top form, lengthen the body and come in a complete prone position.</p> <p>B. Exhale out completely, take a few rounds of breath, and relax the neck and shoulders.</p> <p>C. From here, inhale, lift the head and chest off the floor, and placing the elbows on the floor, rest the chin on the inner palms.</p> <p>D. Supporting the chin, connect to the stretch at the front neck, and the feel the breath as the chest expands.</p> <p>E. With each breath, connect to how the shoulders and neck feel in this supported neck stretch pose while in prone.</p> <p>F. Remain here for about 3-6 breaths, based on your body comfort.</p>

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Downward Facing Dog Form Knees On Floor	Coming - ɪəʔəʃ Going - ɪəʔuʃ Moving down - dɪwʔgʷəd Going below - dɪwʔʃəp Dog - sqʷəbəy Knee - səxʷqəpʊcid Floor - ʃəlidup	A. Release from Crocodile form on elbows, exhale to lengthen the arms on the floor. B. Stretching the arms in front of you on the floor, look down and as you inhale lift the chest and hips up. C. Come in the variation of downward facing dog form. The lengthening of the arms and the pushing of the face to the floor can be a great way to ease out the shoulder and neck stiffness. D. Remain here without putting too much pressure on the neck. E. The lengthening of the back will also be a great way to ease out any stress or tensions in the shoulders. F. Remain for about 4-6 breaths, as you watch how the upper back stretches with each breath.
Extended Child Form Variation Head Up	Wide - ɪəqʰtəb Children - wiʷsu To raise head - ʃəqəd ʔə sʃəyʷus	A. Release to sit down on the knees in extended child form variation head up. B. Look up, sitting comfortably to just connect to the breath, as the shoulders and neck feel at ease. C. Stay here for about 3-6 breaths, acting both as a counter pose for the previous pose and prep pose for the next pose. D. Ground the palms on the floor as you gently lengthen the neck to look up.
Extended Child Form Variation Hands On Head	Wide - ɪəqʰtəb Children - wiʷsu Hands - ʃəʃəʃəʃə Head - sʃəyʷus	A. Then moving ahead, gently drop the head on the floor. B. Come to extended child form variation hands on head. C. Supporting the head with the cupping of the hands, stay here to feel the gently pressure at the neck and shoulders. D. Surrender into the pose and remain for about 4-6 breaths. If any discomfort (request your students) release from the pose and sit back into the earlier pose.

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Reverse Corpse Form	Lying face down (lay face down) - bəʕagʷil ʔə ʕəpus To be at rest - səsqəʔqʷ	<p>A. Release from extended child form variation hands on head, and lengthen your body to go flat on the floor in a prone position.</p> <p>B. Lie on your belly in reverse corpse form with arms stretched out at the shoulder level.</p> <p>C. Relax the body by connecting the breath and feeling it at the tip of the nostrils and continue this for about 12 breaths.</p>
Reclined Bound Angle Cactus Arms	Lying on your back on a flat surface inside of house - ʔəsbəʕagʷil ʕəd ʔal ti dscəliʕ ʔal ti ʕəlidup Lying on your back on the ground - ʔəsbəʕagʷil ʕəd ʔal ti dscəliʕ ʔal ti swatixʷtəd	<p>A. Moving into an extended supine position. Place the soles of your feet together and cactus the arms.</p> <p>B. Remain here for about 1 minute connecting with your breath.</p>

WEEK 10	Cold Water Cleanse & Trauma Informed Yoga Class   45 Min Class	
Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Mountain Form Palms Facing Forward	Mountain - sbadit Palm of hand - stəqulaʕiʔ	<p>A. Begin standing, feet a few inches apart, place the feet firm on the floor and stand extending the spine while taking the shoulders behind.</p> <p>B. Take a few breaths and slowly breathe deep.</p> <p>C. Stretch the arm to your sides, opening the palms and fingers. Tuck the belly in and focus on doing this throughout.</p> <p>D. Stay here for about 6 breaths.</p>
Standing Wind Release Form Prayer Hands	To stand up - təḵilʕ Wind - ʕəḵḵəb Let go of something you were holding - gəḵəd Praying, to pray - skʷədicut	<p>A. Bring the palms together placing at the chest as you inhale.</p> <p>B. Lift the right leg bending at the knees and hold the right thigh parallel to the floor.</p> <p>C. Point the toes down and stay in balance.</p> <p>D. Exhale completely and bring the weight of the body towards the left side of the hips and the left foot.</p> <p>E. Release the right leg and repeat on the other side.</p>

Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
Warrior III Squat Form	Warrior (of the world) - tubšədad To bend down or over - tudʔildxw	<p>A. In a flow, exhale and bend the torso forward while bending the left knee and stretching the right leg behind you.</p> <p>B. Stretch the back leg and once you get your balance, stretch the arms in front extending the spine.</p> <p>C. Keep the body calm using the core muscle strength.</p> <p>D. Keep in balance using the support of the left foot.</p>
Twisted Lizard Form	To twist - čəlpcut Salamander - p̓ipqadʔut	<p>A. Exhale, place the hands on the floor along with the right foot on the floor and bring the torso down, pressing the left knee and thigh outwards.</p> <p>B. Place the hands firmly on the floor and twist the face looking towards the left side. While doing this the chest, shoulders and the hips come parallel to the floor, flexing the left hips and left foot.</p> <p>C. Press as you exhale, and go as close as possible to the floor feeling the stretch at the inner thighs and shoulders.</p> <p>D. Stay here for 6 breaths.</p>
Nectar Of The Moon Form II	Moon/sun shining on the floor - gəqbič Moon - tuqʷaləb	<p>A. Inhale and lift the torso up, pressing the right hand towards the floor.</p> <p>B. In a flow as you inhale, take the left arms outwards as you twist the shoulders and the chest, taking it far behind.</p> <p>C. While in this movement open the heart and the chest.</p> <p>D. Exhale and open the hips along with the chest and take the gaze behind you in this complete twist.</p> <p>E. Press the outer feet firm on the floor and maintain the balance.</p>
Mountain Form Palms Facing Forward	Mountain - sbadit skʷatač Palm of hand - stəqulačʔ	<p>A. Begin standing, feet a few inches apart, place the feet firm on the floor and stand extending the spine while taking the shoulders behind.</p> <p>B. Take a few breaths and slowly breathe deep.</p> <p>C. Stretch the arm to your sides, opening the palms and fingers. Tuck the belly in and focus on doing this throughout.</p> <p>D. Stay here for about 6 breaths.</p>





Yoga Form	LUSHOOTSEED	Points On How To Do The Form
High Lunge Form	Something high/high above something - šəqbid To bend your knee - ʔəspuy t(i) adsəxʷqəpucid	A. Exhale turn towards the other side placing the right foot forward. B. Inhale and in a flow extend the arms up while bending the right knee.
Twisted Lizard Form	To twist - čəlpəd Salamander - pípqadʔut	A. Exhale completely taking the torso towards the floor to press the shoulders, arms, chest and face. B. Twist taking the gaze towards the right side while using the core muscles to remain in balance. C. Exhale and come parallel to the floor engaging the back leg and the front thigh.
Nectar Of The Moon Form II	Moon/sun shining on the floor - gəqbič Moon - tuqʷaləb	A. Inhale, raise the torso up pressing the left hand on the floor. B. Twist the torso, shoulders, chest, and hips taking the right arm behind you gazing behind. C. Open the heart and use the core and the hips to stay in balance
Downward Facing Dog Form	Coming - ləʔəx Going - ləʔuχʷ Moving down - dxʷgʷəd Going below - ʔəsχəp Dog - sqʷəbəy	A. Exhale and release to bring the right foot behind close to the left foot and press the hands, shoulders and torso inwards. B. Press and exhale completely
*Repeat High Lunge Form To Downward Facing Dog Form*	Something high/high above something - šəqbid To bend your knee - ʔəspuy t(i) adsəxʷqəpucid	*Repeat High Lunge Form To Downward Facing Dog Form*
Extended Child Form	Wide - təqtəb Children - wiw̓su	A. Release knees to floor and bring knees about mat width apart. Sit back on heels and walk hands forward. Release head on the mat once you are as far extended as possible. B. Stay here for about 1 minute.



## **dxʷdəwucid/dxʷstəgʷačʷ ləšucid REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

Below are reflection questions to engage youth around feelings they have thinking about their language learning journey. Invitation to replace **dxʷdəwucid/dxʷstəgʷačʷ ləšucid** with your traditional Indigenous language:

- **What feelings do you have arising in you thinking about learning dxʷdəwucid/dxʷstəgʷačʷ ləšucid?**
- **How does it feel in your body when you hear dxʷdəwucid/dxʷstəgʷačʷ ləšucid spoken?**
- **What inspires you to want to learn your ancestral language?**
- **Have you had a healing experience through language learning that you want to share with the group?**
- **How does it feel to be connected to your body through yoga and hear your ancestral language?**



## PART 4:

# Tools & Activities

### WHY GUIDE YOUTH BACK TO THEIR BODIES?

*“Breath is one of the greatest gifts we have been given. Breathing gives us the opportunity to actively participate within our life, a connector of our Spirit, body, and mind. The quality of our breath has the power to calm and fuel, as well as nourish and cleanse. With mindful, conscious breathing we can invite in balance and healing. In witnessing our breath, we may notice connections that are within ourselves and also throughout Creation.”*

Jaime Hunt, Indigenous Yoga & Wellness Teacher

Our workshop sessions all begin by providing an opportunity for youth to connect to their body through trauma-informed breath and embodiment practices. We support youth to practice interoception, self-awareness, and mindfulness by utilizing their breath and bodies as tools for self-regulation. Healing trauma requires us to safely reclaim empowered states of being.

As mentioned in the modules, trauma is stored in the body. To process trauma in a holistic and Indigenous centered approach, connecting back to the body is fundamental. This includes connection to land, self, community, song, and movement.

Below are grounding techniques that can be utilized in your work with youth:





# Grounding & Self Regulating Techniques To Open Each Session & To Use Throughout the Program

## **GROUNDING 1:**

Written by Ivy Richardson

Invitation to start our grounding practice by getting into a comfortable seat. Once you are comfortable, an invitation to just notice the breath... not really doing anything to change it... just putting our attention towards our focus on the breath, noticing the natural inhale... and exhale... as your breath enters... and leaves the body.

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

I invite you to imagine invisible roots growing from your feet, reaching deep into the earth. Feel yourself rooted to the earth; the connection remains wherever your feet take you. Imagine heat rising from the earth, warming you and lighting you up inside.

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

I now invite you to take three slow, deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth. Alternatively, take as many breaths as you need to feel more aware of the energy transfer between your body and the earth.

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Next, I invite you to imagine invisible roots growing from your feet, reaching deep into the

earth's core in mere seconds. Feel yourself rooted to that center, even if your feet have to move across the ground. Wherever you go, now, the connection remains intact.

Imagine heat rising from the earth's core and filling your belly, warming you and lighting you up inside. Enjoy this sensation as you breathe in and out.

Continue breathing and drawing warmth and calm up into your body.

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Imagine yourself exhaling some of that heat without exhausting the supply. The earth keeps you well supplied with its fire and energy, but now you can draw it further up and exhale it just as you can with any anxiety or agitation you feel. Inhaling warmth, a glowing inner peace. As you exhale, an invitation to let go of anything you feel ready to part with that is weighing on you. Invitation to repeat after me in your head or out loud: I feel strong, filled with light and warmth, unstoppable.

## **GROUNDING 2:**

Written by Ivy Richardson

Invitation to start our grounding practice by getting into a comfortable seated position, and once you are comfortable, just notice the breath... not really doing anything to change it... just putting our attention, our focus on the breath. Noticing the natural inhale... and exhale... as your breath enters... and leaves the body.

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Next, I invite you to allow any thoughts and tension of the day to disappear. Feel the muscles of your body relax as you let go of any physical tension. Especially the jaw and the eyes muscles, and any areas you notice are tenser than others. Feel each muscle relaxing as you let go of tension there.

#### THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Now focus on your breath as you breathe in and out, allowing it to flow smoothly, breathing in from infinity and out to infinity. Keeping your awareness on the breath As you become one with the flow of life, at one with your being as you breathe in from infinity and out to infinity. And as you do so, become aware of that place of peace within:

The place where you are most authentic self - the center of your being. This is the real you, Beyond the thoughts, dramas, and identifications of the mind. You are not your thoughts. You are not your emotions. You are not the roles you play. You are a center of pure awareness, A center of pure being. Journey to this center, And allow yourself to become more and more present there

#### THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

As you breathe in from infinity and out to infinity. Keep your attention on the experience of being And being more deeply. Imagine that in this center, you are light. And allow that light to grow and expand with your being. As you become more and more present.

#### THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Breathing in from infinity and out to infinity. Become your infinite self. Feel the light and the peace of this being. Allow the light to flow through your entire body. Bathing every organ, every muscle, every cell, Aligning your body to its true identity. Allow the light to expand outwards around your body as if you are glowing. As you breathe in from infinity and out to infinity.

Feel the roots of your physical being going deep into the Earth, Touching all living things with your light, And knowing how connected you are with the Earth.

Give thanks for the life you have and the opportunity to be in physical form, Which teaches you the wisdom of authentic living. Celebrate

your true self. Breathing in from infinity and out to infinity.

#### THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

As you stay present in your center, Experience your light radiating outwards across the world, time, and space. Feel your connection with all things. You are an infinite self.

When you are ready for an invitation to come back to your physical body, In the present moment: Keeping your attention on your breath, Feeling yourself fully present in your body, and gently opening your eyes if they are closed, Feeling fully grounded and centred and ready to greet the rest of the day, With more significant presence, Greater authenticity, Greater wisdom, Greater peace, and Greater compassion.

### **GROUNDING 3:**

Written by Ivy Richardson

Invitation to start our grounding practice by getting into a comfortable seat and once you are comfortable just noticing the breath...not really doing anything to change it...just putting our attention, our focus on the breath. Noticing the natural inhale... and exhale... as your breath enters... and leaves the body.

#### THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

We are going to do a 5 senses grounding. So I invite you to notice how your body is supported by whatever you're sitting on. Whether you're on the ground, mat or chair... just notice how your body makes contact with whatever is supporting you right now.

#### THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Next...I'm going to invite you to have you bring awareness to your feet...and to what your feet are making contact with... and if you're wearing shoes or socks just notice your feet inside the shoes or socks...

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Now I'd like to invite you to bring your awareness to your clothing... and just become aware of how your clothing is resting on your body... and you might even just take your hand and rub it across your shorts or pants, or your shirt just to notice the texture of your clothing... just really allowing yourself to notice your clothing and noticing the texture.

Next I invite you to bring your awareness to how on your inhales and exhales... the clothing moves on your body... just really allowing yourself to notice that very subtle movement.

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Next we'll bring our awareness to the sense of sound. So what I'd like to invite you to do now is just notice any sounds that you hear beyond my voice... and you might not notice any and that's okay... either way... see if you can bring your awareness to any sounds you might hear.

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

And next I'd like to invite you to bring your awareness to the absence of sound... so just the space between any obvious sounds that you hear...

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

Next, I'd like to invite you to bring your awareness to your sense of smell. Now with this one... you might notice the subtle scent of something... or you may notice the absence of any scent... either way just notice and be aware of what is happening within your sense of smell...

Next invitation to bring your awareness to the sense of taste... and similar to smell it might be that you notice a sense of taste or it might be that you notice the absence of a taste... and either way its okay... Just bring your awareness there... and while we're here.... Watching our noticing the sense of taste...

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

And lastly, we'll tune in to the sense of sight. And what I'd like to invite you to do is just look around the room where you are and I'd like you to identify five colors that are either neutral or in some ways pleasing to you...

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

And finally with sense of sight... I'd like you to notice different... three different shapes... just look around the room and notice different shapes that you see...

THE READER TAKES 2 - 3 BREATHS

So we have traveled through the five senses in this grounding practice and I invite you to close our practice with three inhales and exhales....

So inhaling... 1,2,3,4

Exhaling... 1,2,3,4

Inhaling... 1,2,3,4

Exhaling... 1,2,3,4

Inhaling... 1,2,3,4

Exhaling... 1,2,3,4

## **GROUNDING 4: WITNESSING THE BREATH:**

Written by Jamie Hunt

This can be practiced anytime thought-out the day, in any way you choose. Options could be standing, seated, lying down, or walking. It can be a great way to start your day from the moment you wake up. You can practice for as long as you like and as often as you choose.

The invitation is to bring your awareness to your breath. Without trying to change it, observe the current quality of your breath. You might notice:

- The speed and depth, the length of your inhale and the length of your exhale, as well as the pauses in between.
- The physical sensation you feel following your inhale, as your breath moves from your nose/mouth to fill your lungs
- The physical sensation you feel as you exhale, following your breath as it moves from your lungs back out of your body.
- The energetic or emotional sensations that are present as you witness the flow of your entire breath.

As you feel ready, you can choose to change your breath. Notice how it feels if you:

- Make your breath longer, smoother and more fluid.
- Allow your breath to guide you through your body.
- Breathe into the center of yourself, connecting with your inner resource.
- Link your breath to a positive word, such as breathing in love.

When your practice feels complete to you, take a moment to reflect. You may notice:

- Any shifts within yourself from when you started to when you are finished.
- What felt comfortable and what was difficult
- How your day affects your breath and how your breathing affects your day

### **GROUNDING 5: LENGTHEN THE EXHALE - DEVELOPED BY YOGA OUTREACH**

If you would like, begin by finding a comfortable seated position. In your own time, bring your awareness of your breath, noticing each inhale and exhale as they flow in and out.

THE READER TAKES 2-3 BREATHS

If you would like, gently lengthen your exhale, perhaps slowing down your breath with each cycle.

THE READER TAKES 2-3 BREATHS

It may be helpful to add a count to the breath in and a count to the breath out, making the out breaths a couple of counts longer than the in breaths. You're welcome to try that out if it's helpful for you, finding your rhythm, knowing that you can come back to your natural breath any time.

THE READER TAKES 2-3 BREATHS

When you're ready, if your eyes are closed, gently open them and notice how you feel.

### **GROUNDING 6: BELLY BREATH - DEVELOPED BY YOGA OUTREACH**

Invitation to Find a comfortable seated position in your chair. Whatever that is for you today. If you wish, you could come a little closer to the edge of the seat to maintain a tall comfortable spine without using the backrest. From here, you might position your feet about hip-width apart with your knees lined up above your ankles. Allow your shoulders to relax, and place your hands comfortably wherever you like. Your eyes could be open or closed.

In your own time, bring your awareness to your abdomen. You may place one or both hands on your abdomen if that supports your awareness. You might feel your abdomen expand on the inhale and fall on the exhale, allowing for the possibility that you might not feel much movement at all today, meeting your body and breath however they are today.

THE READER TAKES 2-3 BREATHS

If it feels helpful, you could try focusing on being with every inhale for its complete cycle and every exhale for its entire cycle, noticing the rhythm of your breath.

THE READER TAKES 2-3 BREATHS



You might notice that your mind wanders away from your breath often. This is normal, and it's part of the practice. If you like, you could explore gently returning your focus to your breath each time you notice your mind is elsewhere.

THE READER TAKES 2-3 BREATHS

When you're ready, if your eyes are closed, gently open them and notice how you feel.

### **CREATIVE ICEBREAKERS & IMAGINATION NAME GAMES TO BUILD RAPPORT**

These activities were learned through Indigeneyez. These ice breakers and name games help to learn each other's names, and build rapport by asking youth to take a small risk and engage their imagination. This builds trust within the group. Using our imagination is healing for the Default Mode Network. These games also invite the spirit of our inner child to be silly and play.

#### **Name Game - Walk into the middle**

Invite youth to Form a circle. Everyone gets the chance to use their creativity and imagination to come up with their special walk. Walk into the middle, say, "hi i'm avis" and walk back.

Now everyone else in the group will copy your walk into the middle, turn to you and say, "hi avis, you are amazing!"

We then go around the circle, and everyone will have a chance to walk into the middle, introduce themselves, and have the group copy them and tell them they are awesome.

#### **Name Game - Creatively describe yourself**

Invitation to engage your imagination and come up with an adjective (descriptive word) that starts with the first letter of your First Name. Then come up with a hand motion to go with it. For example, Amazing Avis, Awesome Avis, and Aware Avis. Youth will say their name and hand motion,

and we will mirror that back to them as a group.

#### **Milling - group exercise to strengthen our connection to each other**

Milling is an ice breaker that gets folks up and walking around, invites us to engage our creative spirit and imagination and provides an opportunity to build rapport with each other.

The invitation is to start walking around the room and filling the empty spaces without looking at anyone. Just take this time to connect with ourselves. Try not to bump into anyone or touch anyone. Simply walk into the empty spaces in the room. Checking in with ourselves, *How are we feeling in this new group? Excited? Nervous? Anxious? What sensations may we be feeling in our body that are connected to our feelings?*

As you walk, take some deep breaths and allow your energy to settle.

Now invitation to notice People as you pass them. Just peek at each other. Then maybe get a little bolder and let yourself greet People through a glance. Maybe nod your head to acknowledge folks as you pass them and make eye contact if that feels right for you.

Now invitation, freeze where you are standing, and go back to back with the person closest to you.

Once everyone has found a partner, turn to face your partner, and you will both have a chance to answer these questions:

- 1. What is your favourite season and why?**
- 2. What is one crucial thing to you that had to give up to attend this program (time with a loved one, work, school, etc.)**

Once you have both answered the question, turn back to back again and wait for the others to be done.

Now the invitation is to continue moving around the space, but pay close attention to your

feet and the contact with the ground while you walk and fill the spaces in the room. Connect with the feeling of having your feet supported by the ground. And now, make eye contact with People as you pass by them, and maybe smile if you feel inclined as you make eye contact. Now without talking, find a new partner and stand back to back. Here are the two questions you will answer:

**3. What is one thing you would change in your community if you could?**

**4. Who is someone you love, and why do you love them?**

Now we will continue walking around the space and use our imagination and pretend that we are walking through thick mud, we are really trudging through the mud, and it is hard to walk ..... now imagine that you are a bear who is just waking up from a long winter's nap and is slowly moving around. This bear is starving and wants to find some fish or berries to eat. Now Without talking, find a new partner and stand back to back. Once everyone has found a partner, turn to each other and each answer these questions:

**5. When are you your most authentic self? (true self)**

**6. Who is someone in your life that gives you a sense of belonging and connection? Or a place that gives you a sense of belonging?**

**YES, AND**

This easy-to-play storytelling game ignites the imagination and teaches the first rule of theatre improvisation: “say yes”. Ask participants to form circles of 3 or 4 people and decide who will go first (A).

- A begins by making up a story. It can be any story, past, present, or future. After setting the stage through three or four sentences, A stops at the end of a sentence.
- B picks up the story with the words, “Yes, and...” B then continues to tell the story in the same voice as A. This means, if the story was started

in the first person, the story continues in first person. B adds three or four sentences and stops at the end of a sentence.

- C then picks up the story with, “Yes, and...”, adds to the story and stops at the end of a sentence. The story continues around and around the circle with each person picking up with the words, “Yes, and...”
- Let the storytelling go for 7-10 minutes and then call “stop.”

**Tips:** Make sure participants know they are to come to the end of a sentence before passing it on to the next person. Demonstrate what you mean by everyone in the circle using the same storytelling voice. Encourage participants to stand up while playing this game. People naturally add more gesture and energy to their stories when they are standing.

**ONLINE VERSION:**

It can be played online with the main large group with each person calling out the name of the person they want to go next or they can play it in breakout rooms – groups of 4 – 6. After, it's fun to have them come up with a moral of the story they created and share it in the chat box.

**EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE**

EFT, or the Emotional Freedom Technique, is a tool for treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (church et al., 2018). EFT, also known as “tapping,” works by stimulating a set of eight acupuncture points by tapping on them with the fingertips, which is a form of acupressure (Church & Feinstein, 2013). The success of EFT in treating PTSD suggests that it could also be effective with complex personality and relational difficulties rooted in childhood trauma (church et al., 2018). Tapping decreases cortisol, significantly reduces pain, anxiety, depression, and the symptoms of PTSD, and increases feelings of happiness and immune system function (Bach et al., 2019).

EFT can significantly reduce the risk of suicide in Youth by improving their physiological markers resulting in positive psychological outcomes. According to Patel and Pandey (2021), EFT effectively increases our energy system at a steady pace. We start feeling better, more relaxed, peaceful, and serene by initiating this rebalancing. All in all, Uncomfortable emotions, thoughts, feelings, and body responses change with continuous and prolonged use of EFT.

In the work of Indigenous youth suicide prevention, Tapping can be offered as a tool for grounding and self-regulation during our “Howling at the Moon Moments.” Prompting the Youth to say, “Even though I am feeling the spirit of suicide visiting me, I am strong and am resisting this spirit.” Youth can gently tap with two fingers on the eight or more acupoints, including:

- Top of the head
- Start of the eyebrow,
- Side of the eye,
- Under the eye,
- Under the nose,
- Under the lips (chin crease),
- An inch under the collarbone,
- Under the armpit.

## ENERGY MEDICINE ROUTINE

Our bodies are made up of electric and magnetic currents that flow through the body. Disruptions in our energetic and magnetic fields may be an early warning sign of imbalances, which lead to illness (Tiller et al., 1995). Energy medicine is a holistic medicine rooted in the belief that healers can channel healing energy to patients and create positive outcomes (Evans, 2008). Healing from trauma, which is integral to staying alive if one lives

with the spirit of suicide, requires us to understand the connection and interrelationship between our physical, emotional, spiritual and energetic selves.

Energy medicine practices can be helpful for trauma recovery as these techniques can deeply release held trauma and bring the mind, body, and spirit back to a state of balance. It encompasses a series of therapies based on the idea that energy disruption can cause imbalances within the physical and emotional bodies. Our thoughts, emotions, and physical responses are all expressions of energy. Therefore, to recover from trauma, we have to find the underlying causes affecting our energy, treat them, and restore our balance and flow (Taraborelli, 2021).

### Daily Energy Medicine Routine

**Calming** - It is straightforward, with one hand on the front of the forehead and the other on the back of the neck. Just focus on your breathing. You can have your elbows resting on a table, or you can do this lying down. This calms the fight/flight response by bringing blood flow back to your frontal cortex

**Heart Hug** - (arms crossed over the chest, hands under armpits). It is an energy medicine exercise that can bring you back to yourself if you have had some emotional intensity.

**Cross-over shoulder pull** - Start with your left hand on your right shoulder and spread it across the opposite hip with a flat palm. Same thing on the other side. Repeat. This gives us energy if we need it.

**Cross Crawl** - Raise your left knee and simultaneously slap your left thigh with your right hand. Repeat the same thing on the right knee. You can do this by walking, sitting or standing. Clears the mind, helps the left and right brain connect, and helps with coordination.

**Wayne Cook** - Both Hands out in front of you, arms straight and back of palms touching, then cross hands over, so your fingers clasp, and tuck

them into your body, and cross your legs.

Breathe in and lengthen up through the spine, exhale soften the spine rounding the spine slightly forward. Inhale lift and lengthen through the spine

Switch the direction of your hands, tuck into the body, switch legs, and do the same thing on the other side, repeating as many times as you like

To finish the Wayne cook, unclasp the hands and legs, bring your hands into the shape of a temple (triangle), thumbs and index fingers come to touch, bring your thumbs to the forehead at your

third eye, and just stay here for a few breaths and feel the calm come to your body. Relaxing the neck, shoulders and the forehead

**Crown Pull** - press your fingers of both hands into the centre of your forehead and slide apart a couple of inches - move your hands up to the top of your forehead, press the fingers in and slide them apart - repeat this, pressing in and sliding out all down the centre of your head, in addition to the back of the neck - when you get to the base of the neck, squeeze the shoulder muscles and let your hands drag down and off.

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