

Ningwanuk Meshquajese

Wings of Change

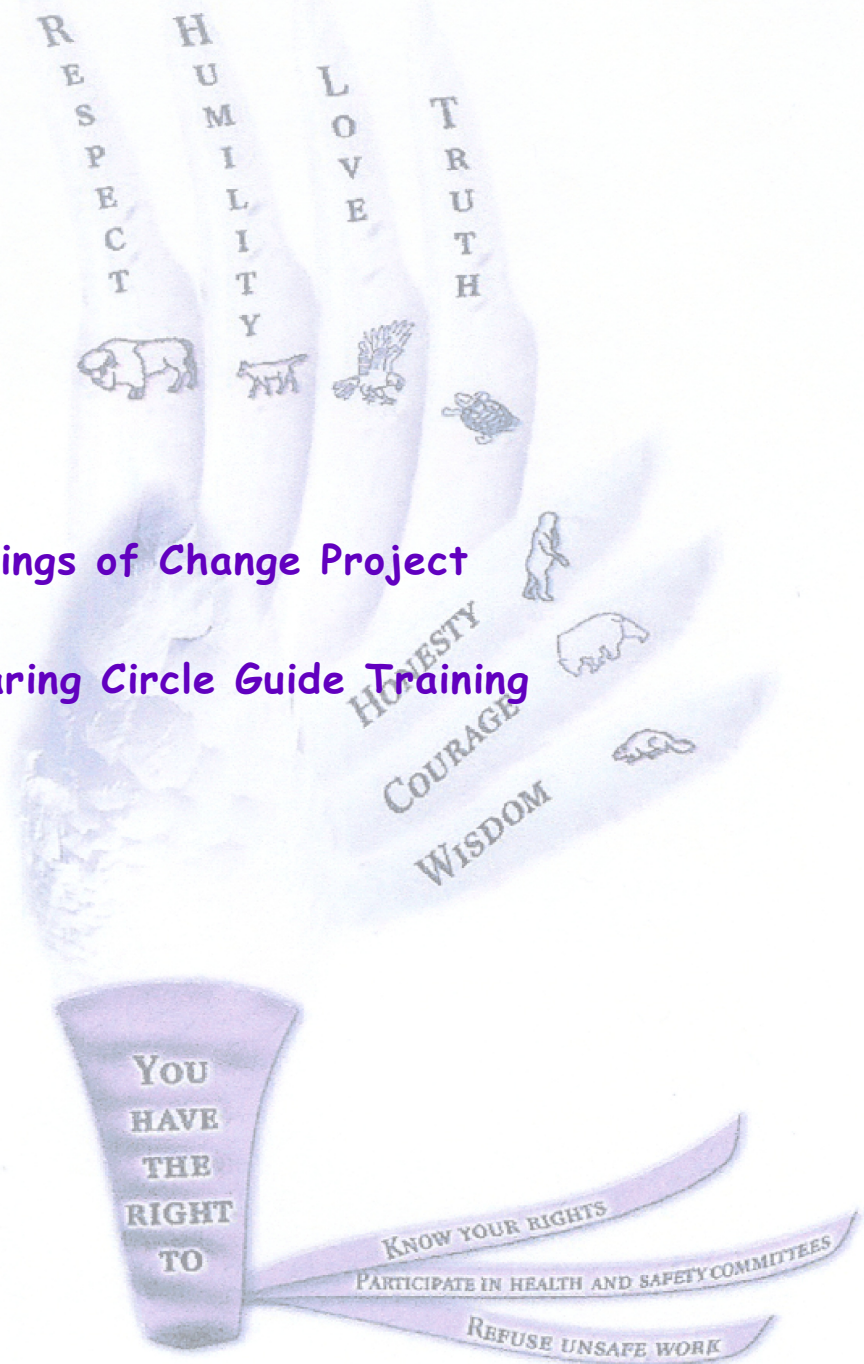
Aboriginal Workers Education and Outreach Project

7 Sacred Teachings + 3 Workers Rights = Path to a Healthy & Safe Workplace

Introduction

Welcome to the Wings of Change Project

7 Sessions for Sharing Circle Guide Training Acknowledgements



Working with the Aboriginal Community to Create Healthy Workplaces for Aboriginal Workers

Welcome to the Wings of Change Project

As Sharing Circle Guides you will be an important part of the Aboriginal Workers Project. Together we will continue to make a difference.

Over the last three years the Occupational Health Centre's Aboriginal Workers Education and Outreach project has equated the seven Sacred Aboriginal teachings with the three workers' rights as part of storytelling within Sharing Circles. We held Sharing Circles with many Aboriginal organizations, teachers and students. We also recently began to merge our Circles with workplace health and safety committee work.

Seven Sacred Teachings	Three Workers' Rights
Respect Humility Love Truth Honesty Courage Wisdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Right to Know● Right to Participate in Health & Safety Committees● Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

We learned early in our discussions with the Aboriginal community that Aboriginal workers are even more reluctant than other workers to become involved with their workplace health and safety issues. This is attributed, in large part by the Aboriginal community, to be a consequence of loss of their culture in many ways during colonization, especially during residential school or foster or adoptive life experiences. They learned as youngsters that if they complained, they were often punished more. This reluctance to voice concerns often continues into their adult lives and even still sometimes continues to be passed down generationally to this day.

As part of their healing journey many participants within Sharing Circles, name and move beyond their generational inhibitions to become actively engaged in their workplace health and safety concerns for the first time.

The Wings of Change Project would like to thank the 28 Sharing Circle Guides who have completed the Sharing Circle Guide Training and are now available to share their learnings with others in future Sharing Circles. We appreciate your commitment, life experience and workplace stories. Your insight has already been blended with the knowledge and skills acquired by the Occupational Health Centre staff over time. Together our time and talents have contributed to the development of this Spirit Toolkit.

The staff at the Occupational Health Centre will continue to support your work by supplementing information and learning activities on request and will co facilitate if needed.

This binder contains background information and resources that are intended to be incorporated as part of future Sharing Circles. Each module addresses a topic that we anticipate will be frequently requested by the Aboriginal community as workshops co-facilitated by our Sharing Circle Guides and our staff at the Occupational Health Centre.

Each section includes a workshop plan consisting of two columns. The left column describes the learning activity and the right column in bold letters draws attention to resources available to support each learning activity.

As you use this Spirit Toolkit your ongoing comments are important to us. Please contact us at

MFL Occupational Health Centre, Inc.
102-275 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 4M6
Phone: 204-949-0811
Fax: 204-956-0848
Email: mflohc@mflohc.mb.ca

7 Sessions for Sharing Circle Guide Training

General Information for Sharing Circle Guides

Session 1 Truth

7 Sacred Teachings + 3 Workers Rights = Path to a Healthy & Safe Workplace



This project equates the Seven Sacred Teachings and Workers' Right within Sharing Circles. We believe that storytelling within Circles helps heal generational trauma and this, over time, helps some Aboriginal workers who are currently reluctant to be involved with their workplace health and safety issues to begin to move forward to address their workplace concerns.

Session 2 Love

Healing for Change



Aboriginal workers will often quit their job or quietly accept unfair treatment or unsafe working conditions. For some, this reluctance to become involved stems from the generational effects of colonization. The *Wings of Change* project believes that unresolved generational grief (blood memory) needs to be named thus enabling the healing journey to begin so that workers will eventually become more willing to engage in their workplace health and safety issues.

Session 3 Honesty

Identifying Hazards in Your Workplace



Workers have the right to expect healthy and safe workplaces. Workers understand the hazards they face everyday. Workers often instinctively know if their work is unsafe or unhealthy. Workers need to be involved in identifying their workplace hazards and addressing these hazards preferably at the source of the problem. Working closely together with their workplace health and safety committee, workers can help make a meaningful difference over the long run.

Session 4 Humility

Ergonomics - Preventing Pains and Strains



Work shouldn't hurt, but for many workers it does. The worker often does highly repetitive, fast-paced work in awkward positions and eventually musculoskeletal injuries result. These injuries comprise more than half of the workers compensation claims in Manitoba. Ergonomics finds ways to adjust the work to better *fit the work to the worker* to avoid preventable pain and injuries.

Session 5 Respect



Respect in the Workplace

Each worker has a right to dignity and respect in the workplace, but workers also have a responsibility to help it happen. Workers expectations and laws are evolving to reflect a growing awareness that disrespect in the workplace is damaging. It's like a toxin that poisons the work environment. When one worker walks around emotionally injured then everyone in that workplace is also injured.

Session 6 Courage



Violence Prevention at Work

Violence at work is a growing and serious occupational hazard. The victim often experiences depression, irritability, anger, and a sense of anxiety and vulnerability. If the cause of the violence is not addressed then symptoms are likely to progress to chronic psychological problems or physical illness. At the same time, the organization often experiences decreased morale, poor interpersonal relationships, decreased productivity, increased absenteeism and increased staff turnover.

Session 7 Wisdom



Moving Forward with Your Workplace Safety and Health Committee

Effective Workplace Safety and Health Committees serve an important role in providing workers the collective opportunity to participate in decisions that will affect their health. Workplace health and safety committees are key to a healthy and safe work environment over the long term.



Acknowledgements

Over time we have become mysteriously embedded in each other's work. Together we have made a meaningful difference.

Thank you **Elder Flora** for being our mentor and glue throughout all our time together. Your persevering dream of a three year project came to be!

Thank you **Elaine Whitford** who courageously yet gently pursued the question "Why is it that Aboriginal workers are even more reluctant than workers in general to get involved with workplace health & safety issues."

Thank you **Rick Ratte** for that precious moment of enlightenment that equated the 7 Sacred Teachings with the 3 Workers' Rights. This approach became the foundation of our project.

Thank you **Pectanacoot Nenakawa** for gifting the name of this project "Ningwanuk Meshquajese" Wings of Change. The name inspired us to soar.

Thank you **Yal Yint** for your extensive creative legacy. Your artistic works are so closely interwoven with the healing journey. Your signature "feather" has become synonymous with our project and the Spirit Toolkit. Yal coordinated three Sharing Circle Guide Training series and over 20 additional Circles.

Thank you **Anita Keith** for being our inspirational teacher by breathing healing from spoken truth. Your teachings about generational trauma are foundational to the healing journey that is so much a part of our work.

Thank you **Betty Jesulius** for planting SEEDS in fertile soil. These seeds eventually sprouted to become our work with workplace health and safety committees.

Thank you *Janice Greene* for being our wounded healer. Your profound love of people and passion for this work helps hurting hearts move to new beginnings. Janice coordinated our fourth Sharing Circle Guide Training and two additional Circles.

Thank you to *Karen Hamilton, Diane Gagnon, Maureen Grace* who adeptly co-facilitated the Sharing Circle Guide Training enabling participants to move beyond their generational inhibitions to become actively engaged in their workplace health and safety concerns often for the first time.

Thank you to our 28 Sharing Circle Guides: *Tabitha McIntyre, Irvine LeClaire, Kim Gray, Janice Greene, David Witchard, Val Olson, Karen DeLaRonde, Charles Thomas, Debra Duibaldo, Julie Hiebert, Bertha Anderson, Joseph Brasseur, Delores Courchene, Darlene Dominique, Lee Edwards, Deana Hlonen, Christine Harper, Loma Johnson, Yvonne Landon, Maeengan Linklater, Brenda Maclean, Rosemarie Mayo, Anthony Niigani, Valerie Pruden, Helen Saude, Diane Scribe-Niigani, Eugene Zalexich and David Zirk.* Your commitment, life experiences and work stories in future Sharing Circles will now be the main way the legacy of this project will ripple out.

Thank you *Mona Phillips* for your creative and technical savoir in the production of the Spirit Toolkit resource binder along with patient multitasking of financial reports and report writing.

Thank you *Carol Loveridge* for believing the vision of our project even though the path was not always clearly defined.

Thank you *Janice Meszaros* for enabling the Wings of Change Project to happen. You and the Workers Compensation Board supported us even when we were still uncovering words and ways to move our vision forward.

Megwetch,
Diana Ludwick
Wings of Change Project