



Cultural Guideposts of Health Reflection Guide

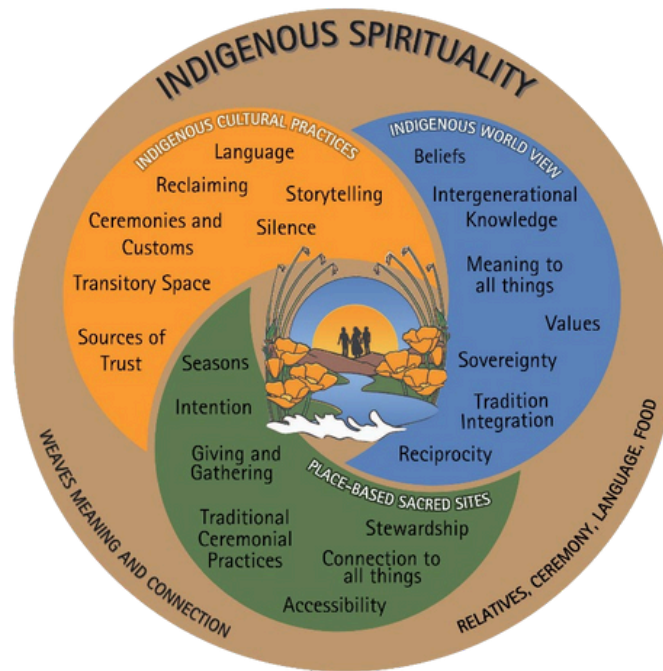
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Reflections

Context and Application	1
Spirituality	3
Family and Relatives	3
Food	4
Language.....	5
Ceremony.....	5
Indigenous Worldview.....	6
Values	6
Meaning to All Things	7
Sovereignty	7
Tradition Integration	8
Reciprocity	8
Beliefs	9
Intergenerational Knowledge	9
Place-Based Sacred Sites.....	10
Seasons	10
Intention	10
Gathering	11
Stewardship.....	11
Accessibility	12
Connection to All Things	12
Traditional Ceremonial Practices	13
Indigenous Cultural Practices.....	14
Language	14
Storytelling	14
Transitory Space	15
Silence	15
Ceremonies and Customs	16
Sources of Trust	16
Reclaiming	17
Contributors.....	18
Project Leadership Team.....	19

Cultural Guideposts of Health



“The Guideposts provided here are not rigid definitions but starting points for reflection and adaptation. Each term is meant to resonate differently with each community, and you are encouraged to use these insights in ways that make sense for you. These concepts should be applied flexibly, reflecting your community’s unique traditions, practices, and beliefs. Think of these Guideposts as tools to help you evaluate programs and interventions in a way that honors your culture.”

—Joshua Severns, Pembina Chippewa- Little Shell Tribe

Context and Application

Purpose and Application: The Cultural Guideposts of Health provide a framework for evaluating programs and interventions brought into your community. By reflecting on these questions and examples, you can approach any program to ensure it aligns with your cultural values and supports the health of your people through culture. This approach helps maintain the sacred connections that are essential to your identity and well-being. The Guideposts are designed to be adaptable, encouraging you to apply these concepts in ways that resonate with your specific community and traditions. The terms provided are not definitive; they are flexible and should be molded to fit the people and places they are meant to serve. Whether in rural or urban settings, each community can take these Guideposts and tailor them to reflect their own unique relationship with place-based sacred sites, cultural practices, and traditions. Reflections were provided by a Guiding Coalition of Traditional Healers and Knowledge Keepers who gathered for this project. More details are available in the companion document.



Spirituality

Indigenous spirituality is the thread that weaves meaning and connection into every aspect of life. It is not confined to a particular time or place, but is a constant presence that guides our actions, thoughts, and relationships. In Indigenous cultures, spirituality is about balance and connection—within ourselves, with others, with the land, and with the spiritual world. The way we approach time, relationships, and healing in our spiritual practices often contrasts with Western concepts. As a Guiding Coalition member explains, “In Western culture, things are timed in blocks. In Indigenous culture, there is no concept of time. If it goes on for an hour, five hours, it’s however long it takes”. This fluidity allows for deeper, more meaningful connections, where the focus is on the individual’s needs rather than a rigid schedule.

“In traditional practices, the person stays with you until they feel they got what they needed. There is no, ‘hey come back in two weeks.’”

—Carrie Johnson, Wahpeton Dakota Tribe

Family and Relatives

Family in the Indigenous worldview is seen as extending beyond the nuclear family to include the wider community and relatives. It is through family that cultural knowledge, values, and traditions are shared and passed down, continuing the community’s identity and way of life. Family members are crucial to an individual’s identity and wellbeing, providing the support and connection necessary for personal and collective wellness. As highlighted in discussions, “Support the family and friends because they are the ones that continue the care after the initial treatment.” The wellbeing of each member is seen as essential to the health of the whole.

“Family is more than blood; it’s the network of people who carry our stories, our traditions, and our hopes for the future. They’re the ones that go to sweat with us. Eat with us. Pray with us.”

—Kenneth Hanover, Wailacki of the Round Valley Indian Tribes

For Indigenous spirituality, the concept of relatives includes not only the human family but all living beings—plants, animals, the land, and the spiritual entities. This interconnectedness is central to the spiritual worldview, where all beings are seen as relatives who share a sacred connection. This Guidepost encourages you to reflect on how your spiritual practices honor this web of relationships.

“Our spiritual practices remind us that we are all connected. The plants, the animals, the land—they are all our relatives. When we honor them, we honor ourselves.”

—Guiding Coalition Discussion

Application:

In California tribes, the land and natural elements are often referred to as relatives in spiritual practices. Ceremonies and rituals are conducted with the understanding that the earth, plants, animals, and people are all interconnected, and each plays a vital role in maintaining the balance and health of the community.

Questions to reflect on:

- How do your community’s practices view the concept of relatives?
- In what ways does this interconnectedness influence your spiritual worldview?
- How does this concept apply to you and your community?
- How does the program consider the definition of “relatives” in program activities/policies?

Application:

Assess whether the program recognizes the importance of family in the community. The program should involve family members in its processes and provide support that extends to the broader community, recognizing the interdependence of individuals within their familial and community networks.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program include family members in its activities and support systems?
- How does the program acknowledge and reinforce the role of family in the community’s well-being?
- Can the program be adapted to include the extended family and community members?



Food

“Food holds a profound significance in Native American communities, rooted in a deep connection to the land, spirituality, and communal well-being. For us, food is far more than sustenance; it embodies the spirit of our ancestors, the wisdom of the land, and the resilience of our cultures. Traditional foods, grown, harvested, and prepared with respect for the Earth, carry the stories and knowledge passed down through generations.”

—Arlene Brown, *Bishop Paiute*

“Through these communal meals, we not only strengthen our bonds with one another but also renew our connection to Mother Earth, acknowledging that every bite sustains our bodies, our traditions, and our communities.”

—Virginia Carmelo, *Toongvey/Kumeyaay*

Application: In many Native American communities, food is an integral component of ceremony, tradition, and cultural practices. The preparation and gathering of food and interactions among people in community helps to strengthen relationships.

Questions to reflect on:

- What significance does food have in your community?
- Does your program allow for food to be brought in by participants? Does it offer food to participants?
- On an administrative level, is there funding related to programming to support food?



Language

Language carries the teachings of our ways and connects us to our past, present, and future. It is through our language that we name the world, honor our ways, and pass on our knowledge. Language also reflects the way in which we talk about our world and the way we see things; the words we use matter.

“Our language is the breath of our people; when we speak it, we bring our ancestors into the room, and we also honor the voices of those yet to come.”
—Joshua Severns, *Pembina Chippewa- Little Shell Tribe*

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program allow for our language to be used in teaching and communication?
- How does it support the ongoing use and revival of our language?
- Can we bring in our own words and phrases that hold special meaning to us?
- Are the terms and words used in the program respectful to our ways and our people?

Application:

When considering a program, it is important to assess whether it honors our language and supports its continued use and revitalization within the community. The program should make space for our words, our expressions, and the way we communicate.

Ceremony

Ceremonies and customs are the living expressions of our culture and spirituality. They are the practices through which we honor our ways, celebrate our lives, and maintain harmony within our community. Ceremonies are not just rituals; they are the very fabric of our community life, guiding us in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.

“Our ceremonies are the way we come together, the way we heal, the way we live our values. They are the soul of our community.”
—Michael Duran, *Apache*

Application:

Does the programming allow for ceremony? Does it honor and respect the connection of ceremony and spirituality?

Questions to reflect on:

- Does the program make space for our ceremonies and customs?
- Is it appropriate or applicable for our ceremonies or customs to be included in a program like this?
- How can we ensure our cultural practices are protected throughout the program’s activities?
- Is the program adaptable enough to include our unique ways?

Indigenous Worldview



Indigenous ways of knowing are drawn from the role of Elders and cultural practitioners in transmitting intergenerational knowledge. These knowledge systems and worldviews convey ancestral wisdom centered in health.

Values

Values in the Indigenous worldview encompass the principles that guide life, such as respect for all living things, the importance of community, and the deep interconnection between humans and the natural world. These values are not merely taught but lived daily, transmitted through cultural practices, storytelling, and community engagement. They form the ethical foundation of the community, guiding decisions, behaviors, and relationships. As one Coalition member noted, “Health is an experience. It’s hard to achieve individual health when your community is hurting”. The collective nature of Indigenous values ties the well-being of the individual to the health of the community and the environment.

“Our values are the roots that anchor us to our land, our people, and our responsibilities to both. They guide us in every decision we make.”

—*Guiding Coalition Discussion*

Application:

When considering a program, evaluate whether it aligns with and supports the core values of the community. The program should actively and respectfully reinforce these values, ensuring that they are integrated into every aspect of its design and implementation, if appropriate.

Questions to reflect on:

- What are the core values of the community? Does this program align with them?
- How does the program support the principles of respect, community, and interconnection?
- Can the program be adapted to reinforce our cultural values in daily practices?

Meaning to All Things

Everything in the world is interconnected and filled with meaning. This belief extends to all aspects of life, where even the smallest action can have a profound impact on the broader community and the natural world. This connection is what gives life its richness and depth, reinforcing the importance of living in harmony with all beings.

“Every action we take ripples through the world, touching everything and everyone around us. That’s the meaning we bring to our lives.”
—*Guiding Coalition Discussion*

Application:

Consider whether the program acknowledges the interconnectedness of all things and supports a holistic approach to health and well-being. The program should be designed to respect the intricate relationships within the community and the environment, promoting practices that honor these connections.

Questions to reflect on:

- How does this program recognize the interconnectedness of all life and its impact on the community? What are the ways it impacts the community?
- How does the program incorporate a holistic view of health and well-being?
- Can the program be adapted to include activities or principles that honor this understanding?

Sovereignty

Sovereignty in the Indigenous worldview refers to the inherent right of Indigenous peoples to govern themselves, maintain their cultural practices, and control their land and resources. It is about asserting authority and autonomy in the face of external pressures, ensuring that Indigenous ways of life are respected and preserved. As discussed by coalition members, sovereignty is not just about political power but about the right to live according to one’s own cultural values and practices.

“We need government-to-government relationships. We have our own Tribal government and sovereignty. Sovereignty is our right to be who we are, to govern ourselves, and to protect the lands and traditions that sustain us.”
—*Guiding Coalition Discussion*

Application:

Ensure that the program respects and supports the sovereignty of the community. The program should acknowledge the community’s right to self-determination and be flexible enough to be adapted or rejected based on the community’s needs and priorities.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program respect and support our community’s sovereignty?
- How does the program acknowledge our right to self-determination and cultural preservation?
- Can the program be adapted to align with our community’s governance and cultural practices?

Tradition Integration

Tradition integration in the Indigenous worldview involves the seamless blending of ancestral practices with contemporary life. It is about adapting traditional knowledge to modern contexts without compromising its integrity, ensuring that cultural practices remain relevant and vital in today's world. This integration is crucial for maintaining cultural continuity while navigating the challenges of modern life. As one Coalition member expressed, "Carrying teachings from the tools left from ancestors. With the drum you put it forward. Use it, teach it, gather."

"Our traditions are living practices. They grow and adapt with us, keeping us grounded while helping us navigate the present."

—*Nathan Blacksmith, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate*

Application:

Evaluate whether the program allows for the integration of traditional practices with contemporary methods. The program should be adaptable, helping the community to incorporate its traditions into conventional contexts while maintaining the integrity of cultural practices.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program allow for the integration of our traditional practices?
- How can the program be adapted to blend our cultural knowledge with contemporary needs?
- Does the program respect the integrity of our traditions while allowing for their evolution?

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is a fundamental principle in the Indigenous worldview, emphasizing the mutual exchange of resources, support, and respect within the community and with the natural world. It is about maintaining balance and harmony by ensuring that giving and receiving are in equilibrium. This principle extends to all relationships, whether among people, with the land, or with the spiritual world.

As discussed in the coalition "Reciprocity is the balance we keep in our lives and with each other. It's how we show respect for the gifts we receive by giving back."

—*LittleDove Rey, Nisenan/Miwok/Maidu*

Application:

Consider whether the program supports the principle of reciprocity within the community and with the environment. The program should promote practices that encourage giving back, whether through community service, environmental stewardship, or cultural exchange.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program promote reciprocity within our community and with the natural world?
- How does the program encourage balanced relationships between giving and receiving?
- Can the program be adapted to support the principle of reciprocity in all aspects of life?

Beliefs

Beliefs in the Indigenous worldview are the spiritual and cultural understandings that guide life. They encompass teachings about the origins of the world, the nature of life and death, and the relationships between humans and the spiritual realm. These beliefs are central to how Indigenous communities understand and interact with the world, influencing every aspect of life.

As one Coalition member noted,

“Our beliefs are the stories that explain the world, the teachings that guide us, and the truths that connect us to everything. Everyone has their own ways, their own beliefs.”

—Chris Stevenson, Santa Ynez Chumash Band

Application:

Ensure that the program respects and incorporates the community’s spiritual and cultural beliefs. The program should be designed to align with these beliefs, providing space for spiritual practices and teachings that are central to the community’s way of life.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program respect and align with our spiritual and cultural beliefs?
- How does the program incorporate our teachings about life, death, and the spiritual realm?
- Can the program be adapted to include our community’s spiritual practices and beliefs?

Intergenerational Knowledge

Intergenerational knowledge refers to the wisdom and cultural practices passed down from elders to younger generations. It is through this transmission that cultural continuity is maintained, ensuring that the values, traditions, and practices of the community endure over time. This knowledge is not just information but a living connection to the past and a guide for the future.

Intergenerational knowledge, through an Indigenous worldview, is a living, reciprocal exchange of wisdom that flows between generations. Traditionally, elders share cultural teachings, stories, and spiritual practices with the younger generations, serving as the foundation of our collective identity and heritage. But in response to historical trauma and cultural disruptions, we now see younger generations stepping forward, bringing their own knowledge and skills back to the elders.

As highlighted in discussions, “Intergenerational knowledge is the thread that weaves our past, present, and future together.” “Our elders are our teachers, our guides. Through them, we learn who we are, where we come from, and how to live in a good way.”

—Guiding Coalition Discussion

Application:

As communities request to learn more about their culture, consider if your agency or program provides opportunities to teach and educate Native people and non-Native staff. Many people are interested in learning the basics of the traditions, since they may not have had opportunities to do so.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does the program integrate cultural continuity in past, present, and future?
- How does the program incorporate intergenerational knowledge?
- Can the program be adapted to include cultural connections?

Place-Based Sacred Sites

These insights into Place-Based Sacred Sites offer a guide for how we can protect, honor, and engage with these important spaces. By reflecting on these questions, you can consider how each topic applies to your community and whether the program aligns with your cultural values. This approach helps ensure that your community's spiritual and cultural connections to sacred sites remain strong and meaningful.

Seasons

Seasons are more than just changes in the weather; they are markers of time and sacred cycles that guide our cultural practices and ceremonies. Each season holds its own unique significance, dictating the timing of rituals, gatherings, and moments of reflection. This cyclical rhythm reminds us of the natural flow we are a part of, teaching us to live in harmony with the earth's timing. As one Coalition member put it, "The seasons guide our ceremonies, showing us when to plant, when to harvest, and when to celebrate."

—Virginia Carmelo, Toongvey/Kumeyaay

Application:

The relationship with the seasons is unique to each tribe and community. This definition is meant to be a starting point, inviting you to reflect on how your own traditions and practices align with the seasonal changes. "There's no way to define it—it's different for everybody, for every tribe."

—Virginia Hedrick, Yurok

Questions to reflect on:

- How do the seasons shape the cultural and spiritual practices in your community?
- In what ways does your community honor the changing seasons through rituals or ceremonies?
- Could the program be adapted to align more closely with the seasonal cycles important to your community?

Intention

Intention is about the purpose and mindfulness we bring when we engage with our sacred sites. This Guidepost encourages you to consider the respect and purpose behind your actions. "Our actions at sacred sites should always reflect the respect and purpose we hold for these places." Think about how intention is expressed in your community and how it guides your interactions with sacred spaces.

"When we step onto sacred ground, our intentions must be pure and clear. It's not just about being there; it's about how we are there—what we bring, what we give, and what we receive."

—Littledove Rey, Nisenan/Miwok/Maidu

Application:

The concept of intention may vary widely among different tribes. This Guidepost is meant to spark reflection on how your community views intention in relation to sacred spaces. The question, "How does this apply to you?" should be central in evaluating how intention is integrated into your cultural practice.

Questions to reflect on:

- What intentions guide your community's interactions with sacred sites?
- How does your community ensure that activities at sacred sites remain purposeful and respectful?
- How does this concept apply to you and your community?

Gathering

Gathering at place-based sacred sites is a powerful way to reinforce social bonds, cultural practices, and spiritual connections. Gathering with one another at these sites is vital to our collective well-being. As one Coalition member reflected:

“Every time we gather at our sacred places, we renew our connection to each other and to the land. It’s in these moments that we remember who we are and why we’re here.”
—*Michael Duran, Apache*

Application:

The significance of gatherings may differ in urban versus rural settings. For some communities, the way gatherings are organized, and their frequency may change depending on their environment. This Guidepost should encourage reflection on how gatherings are organized and their importance within your specific context.

Questions to reflect on:

- How do gatherings at sacred sites strengthen your community’s bonds?
- What role do gatherings play in your community?
- Could the program be modified to support or enhance community gatherings at sacred sites?

Stewardship

Stewardship is the responsibility to care for and protect sacred sites, ensuring they are preserved for future generations. This Guidepost emphasizes the role of the community as caretakers of the land. The way stewardship is practiced may differ across communities, but the underlying principle remains the same: caring for the land with respect and intention.

“Stewardship is about honoring our role as caretakers. It’s our duty to ensure that these sacred places continue to nourish the spirits of those who come after us.”
—*Virginia Hedrick, Yurok*

Application:

In California, stewardship practices might involve community-led initiatives to maintain and protect natural sites that hold cultural significance, ensuring that these places remain untouched by development and accessible for future generations.

Questions to Reflect On:

- How does your community practice stewardship of sacred sites?
- What challenges do you face in protecting or accessing these spaces?
- How might the program support or enhance stewardship efforts within your community?

Accessibility

Accessibility is about ensuring that everyone in the community can reach and engage with our sacred sites. These places should be open to those who need them for spiritual and cultural practices, with as few barriers as possible. Ensuring accessibility is crucial in keeping our sacred spaces alive and meaningful for all members of the community. As was discussed in the Coalition.

“Our sacred places should be accessible to all who seek them, whether for prayer, reflection, or ceremony. They are our lifelines to the spiritual world and must be open to everyone in our community.”
—*Deborah Kawkeka, Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas*

Application:

While accessibility is key, many practical concerns need to be considered. Think about what you have control over in terms of accessibility of land. Also, how might accessibility be different for non-federally recognized tribes as well as urban areas?

Questions to reflect on:

- How accessible are your community’s sacred sites to those who need them?
- What barriers exist that might prevent community members from accessing these sites?
- Could the program help improve or maintain accessibility to these important places?

Connection to All Things

The connection to all things is a core understanding in our relationship with place-based sacred sites. These sites are not isolated; they are part of a larger web of life that includes the land, the humans, non-human relatives and the spiritual world. This connection is what gives these sites their power and significance, as they are seen as places where the spiritual and physical worlds connect.

As one coalition member noted, “These places are more than just physical locations; they are where the threads of our world come together. They connect us to the earth, to each other, and to the spirit that runs through all things.”

—*Guiding Coalition Discussion*

Application:

Does this program or intervention consider how our community weaves meaning and connection to all things. Does it consider where programming occurs or how it can be adapted for the community?

Questions to reflect on:

- How does your community understand and honor the connections between all things at sacred sites?
- In what ways do these connections influence your community’s spiritual and cultural practices? What connections do you see within this program? What connections exist but maybe aren’t always seen?

Traditional Ceremonial Practices

Traditional ceremonial practices conducted at place-based sacred sites connect us to our ancestors and the spiritual world. These ceremonies are essential to maintaining the cultural and spiritual health of the community, ensuring that the sacredness of these sites is upheld. These practices are not just rituals; they are the lifeblood of our culture, keeping our traditions alive and our spirits strong.

As discussed in the Guiding Coalition, “Our ceremonies at these sacred places are how we stay connected to our ancestors and to the spirit world, and they give us guidance from our original instructions.”

Application:

Does the program you are considering make space for the traditional ceremonial practices of the community? What is missing? What can be adapted to integrate and make it more meaningful for the relatives participating?

Questions to reflect on:

- What role do traditional ceremonies play in your community’s connection to sacred sites?
- How do these ceremonies help preserve the cultural and spiritual health of your community?
- Could the program be adapted to support or incorporate your community’s traditional ceremonies at sacred sites?

Indigenous Cultural Practices

Indigenous cultural practices are “activities in which core concepts in health are grounded in intergenerationally perpetuated epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies...” (Yamane & Helm, 2022, p. 14). These practices are shown through active participation and ways of being central to each community’s culture.

Language

Language carries the teachings of our ways and connects us to our past, present, and future. It is through our language that we name the world, honor our ways, and pass on our knowledge. Language also reflects the way in which we talk about our world and the way we see things; the words we use matter.

“Our language is the breath of our people; when we speak it, we bring our ancestors into the room, and we also honor the voices of those yet to come.”

—Joshua Severns, *Pembina Chippewa- Little Shell Tribe*

Application:

When considering a program, it’s important to assess whether it honors our language and supports its continued use and revitalization within the community. The program should make space for our words, our expressions, and the way we communicate.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program allow for our language to be used in teaching and communication?
 - How does it support the ongoing use and revival of our language?
 - Can we bring in our own words and phrases that hold special meaning to us?
- Are the terms and words used in the program respectful to our ways and our people?

Storytelling

This practice serves many purposes, including education, cultural preservation, and teaching our ways of seeing the world. It is a way to maintain a connection to the land, ancestors, and community. Through storytelling, communities pass down values, lessons, and knowledge, ensuring that each generation remains connected to the wisdom of their ancestors.

“The drum, the songs, the ceremonies—they are all part of the story we tell each other to heal and find balance.”

—Nathan Blacksmith, *Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate*

Application:

Storytelling is how we keep our traditions alive, passing down knowledge and values from one generation to the next. When considering a program, see if it makes room for our stories, our lessons, and connection to our way of teaching and learning.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does the program include ways for us to share our stories?
- How does it respect and integrate our oral traditions?
- What are the stories being told within this program? Do they help our people?

Transitory Space

Sacred spaces are not confined to fixed locations. They are created by the presence, intention, and spirit of the people who gather there. These spaces are fluid, moving with us and adapting to our needs. This concept of transitory space allows our spiritual practices to thrive, even when we are physically displaced. As one community member shared,

“Though we do not have our original location for cultural practices, we have now created one that is sacred to us because we meet in this way.”
—*Guiding Coalition Discussion*

Application:

A good program will understand that our sacred spaces move with us—they’re wherever we gather with purpose and spirit. It should be flexible enough to adapt to wherever we choose to meet.

Questions to reflect on:

- Can this program be brought to any place our community holds sacred?
- Is it flexible about where we can gather and practice our ways?
- Does it recognize the value of both permanent and moving sacred spaces in our traditions?

Silence

A sacred and intentional space, a moment for reflection, connection, and deep spiritual listening. It is in these moments of silence that we connect most profoundly with our inner selves, our ancestors, and the world around us. Silence is a powerful part of our ceremonies, allowing the spirit to speak where words fall short. As reflected in our discussions, silence is an active part of spiritual participation, where the absence of words can hold more meaning than speech.

“Silence isn’t just the absence of words, it also signifies the time and space held for all the seen and unseen part of ourselves and our interactions. Silence holds significance in our practices; it creates room for all things.”
—*Krista Armenta-Belen, Santa Ynez Chumash Band*

Application:

A program should respect the moments when we need to be still and listen, allowing for silence to be part of the process.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program respect our need for silence during ceremonies and gatherings?
- How does it incorporate or allow for moments of quiet reflection?
- How is silence a part of your community or everyday life?

Ceremonies and Customs

Ceremonies and customs are the living expressions of our culture and spirituality. They are the practices through which we honor our ways, celebrate our lives, and maintain harmony within our community. Ceremonies are not just rituals; they are the very fabric of our community life, guiding us in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.

“Our ceremonies are the way we come together, the way we heal, the way we live our values. They are the soul of our community.”
—*Michael Duran, Apache*

Application:

A program can make accommodations for ceremonies and customs to be respected. Does the program allow for graduation ceremonies or celebrations to incorporate traditional clothing?

Questions to reflect on:

- Does the program make space for our ceremonies and customs?
- Is it appropriate or applicable for our ceremonies or customs to be included in a program like this?
- How can we ensure our cultural practices are protected throughout the program’s activities?
- Is the program adaptable enough to include our unique ways?

Sources of Trust

In Indigenous communities, trust is sacred. It is built through shared experiences, respect for our traditions, and the relationships we cultivate over time. Trust is foundational to our well-being and healing processes. It extends beyond the individual, encompassing the entire community. “We must treat the family as much as they allow it. If the home is still broken, we’re just sending them right back into the trigger” —*Krista Armenta-Belen, Santa Ynez Chumash Band*

“Trust is not given lightly in our communities; it is earned through respect, shared experiences, and a deep commitment to each other’s well-being.”
—*Michael Duran, Apache*

Application:

When selecting programs, consider whether they support building and maintaining trust within the community. Programs should recognize the importance of holistic approaches that involve not just the individual but the entire family and community, thereby reinforcing trust and collective responsibility.

Questions to reflect on:

- Does this program help us build trust within our community?
- How does it involve our families and community members in the healing journey?
- Does it encourage the participation of our elders and knowledge keepers?

Reclaiming

Reclaiming is the process of restoring and revitalizing the traditions, knowledge, and practices that have been eroded by colonization. It is about taking back our cultural identity and reconnecting with the wisdom of our ways. This process is crucial for our survival and resilience as Indigenous peoples. As Virginia Hedrick stated, “We need folks on the front line focusing on revitalizing these practices. We are not far enough in front to slow down this raging river”. Practicing our ways is reclaiming.

Application:

Consider whether the program respects and supports the process of cultural reclamation. Programs should be flexible enough to allow communities to restore and incorporate traditional practices, recognizing the importance of cultural self-determination and resilience.

Questions to reflect on:

- How does this program support us in reclaiming our traditional practices?
- Is it flexible enough to incorporate the traditions we’re working to revive?
- Does it honor and respect our community’s efforts to restore our cultural ways?

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