

# Wellbeing Waterloo Region

Wellbeing Waterloo Region has made a commitment to develop meaningful relationships and work toward reconciliation with our local Indigenous communities. In turn, Wellbeing Waterloo Region is developing resources and tools to support education with our community partners on acknowledging the land upon which we conduct ourselves.

Indigenous people in our region are not from a single location or territory. They are a larger community that includes members from the First Nations, Métis and Inuit heritage.

## **Land Acknowledgements**

### **What is a land acknowledgement/why do we take time to do one?**

It is a way of honouring the Indigenous people who have been living on and caring for this land, express gratitude and appreciation to the territory you reside on. Land acknowledgements recognize this long standing history with the land, and our place within that history. They acknowledge the need to build our mindfulness of our present relationships and guide how to move forward in both conversations and actions. It is a part of the recommended calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

### **When do we acknowledge the land?**

It is a reflection process that opens up group gatherings, ceremonies, lectures or public events.

### **Who does the land acknowledgement?**

As a point of awareness and relationship building the host of the meeting or event in which you are in attendance will do the land acknowledgement. This can even be if there are no Indigenous individuals at the meeting or gathering.

## **How do I know the name of the Nation we are on?**

If you're unsure of the name of the territory, treaty or Nation you are on please refer to the local Indigenous resources in your area. The following will be the example for the Waterloo Region Wellbeing areas.

## **How do I acknowledge the land?**

We would like to acknowledge the significant contributions and accomplishments of Indigenous Peoples to our community. We also acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge and philosophies of the Indigenous People with whom we share this land today.

*We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which we gather today is the traditional territory of the Anishnawbe, Haudenosaunee and Neutral peoples. Currently situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised to the Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.*

Haudenosaunee (Ho-deh-no-show-nee)

Anishnawbe (Ah-nish-nah-bay)

Neutral / Attawandaron (At-ta-won-da-ron)

## **Smudging**

### **What is smudging?**

Smudging is a ceremony that is used by some Indigenous people as a cleansing of negative energies from spaces including the mind, body and environment and to connect us to creation. This practice was one among many that were made illegal to possess or teach these practices or ceremonies.

Traditional dried medicines are burned to produce a light smoke most often being Sage. More recently and increasingly, a smudge can be done using a liquid that has the essential oils of the medicines. Often this is for consideration of restrictions within facilities or with sensitive participants (i.e. Hospitals, elderly, pregnant or allergy sensitive).

## **Traditional Medicines**

There are generally four medicines including, but not limited to, used in smudging:

**Tobacco** – Some believe it is the first plant that Creator brought to the Native People. Traditional people believe that tobacco is always first to be offered. It opens a space for communication.

**Sage** – is often used to release and cleanse physical spaces and mind/body

**Cedar** – has restorative, protective and purifying uses.

**Sweetgrass** – the sacred hair of Mother Earth. Reminds us to be kind and gentle and has calming effects.

The plants or medicines are placed in a shell or fire proof vessel and lit, using a feather or hand to extinguish the flame – as some believe blowing into the flame sends negative energy into the smudge. Once there is a smoke the smoke is that wafted over the body parts – to think good things (head), see good things (eyes), hear good things (ears), say good things (mouth), feel good things (heart) and walk in a good way. Often the environment is also smudge to clear energy in the room. The smudge is not intended to be filling the room with smoke and consideration for your fire detectors/extinguishers is needed (please consult your facilities information for more detail). The vessel can become quite warm and when placed on materials can cause melting. Once the ceremonies are completed the ashes are respectfully returned to the land.

## **When to smudge?**

Not all Indigenous persons practice smudging. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization explains that Indigenous peoples have the right to practice their cultural traditions and cultures. If there are Indigenous members present at the meeting and requests a smudge. They have brought their own bundle or one has received the teachings on how to smudge and provides

the materials to them to conduct a smudge. Please be mindful of cultural appropriation.

Ensure the appropriate requests to the facility prior to conducting a smudging ceremony as discussed above. Be prepared to explain what a smudge is to the people who may be inquiring on the scent/activity in your area.

For further information please consider reviewing the following documents:

Indigenous Allyship: An Overview

[https://issuu.com/lspirg/docs/allyship\\_toolkit\\_inside\\_pages\\_10.5x/2](https://issuu.com/lspirg/docs/allyship_toolkit_inside_pages_10.5x/2)

<http://www.lspirg.org/knowtheland/>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/indigenous-peoples/cultural-and-linguistic-diversity/undrip-clt/>

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2091412-trc-calls-to-action.html>

<https://locallove.ca/issues/what-are-land-acknowledgements-and-why-do-they-matter/#.XBfZ5a2Wxjo>

<https://www.whose.land/en/treaty/haldimand>

<https://www.todayparent.com/family/books/great-indigenous-stories-to-read-and-share-with-your-kids/#gallery/indigenous-books-for-kids-and-parents/0>

<http://www.aht.ca/images/stories/TEACHINGS/FourSacredMedicines.pdf>