

## INDIGENOUS CULTURAL TIPS

### DIVERSITY OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

- In Canada, over 1.6 million people identify as Indigenous.
- Canada has three distinct Indigenous people groups: First Nations, Metis, and Inuit.
- It is impossible to summarize an everyday cultural reality for all Indigenous Peoples in Canada.
- There are over 600 identified First nations, in addition to the Metis and Inuit peoples, so practices, symbols, and belief systems vary. For example, in Fort McKay, women are not allowed to be part of a drum circle, but they are allowed 60km south in Fort McMurray. Because of this, it is important to be a curious listener and learner when developing relationships with indigenous people.

---

### HONOUR OF ELDERS

- In indigenous families and communities, male and female elders are given great respect.
- They are the knowledge keepers – they know their people's history, practices, and wisdom.
- Elders eat first, get the best seats, and people listen when they speak.
- A good relationship with elders is often the key to being welcomed in the community.

---

### STEWARDSHIP OF CREATION

- Indigenous people in Canada place a high value on the created world. For example, when harvesting sweetgrass, it should not be pulled out by the root but instead be cut with a knife, allowing it to grow back again.
- When taking from nature, it is often customary to give something back at the same time. Properly stewarding nature and the environment is very important.

---

### LOSS OF INDIGENOUS CULTURE

- In the past two centuries, there were active attempts to completely assimilate indigenous people into Canada's Western culture and values.
- One of the ways this was accomplished was by taking young indigenous children from their families and putting them into residential schools, where they were not allowed to speak their own language or practice their own culture. Because of this, many indigenous people have cultural practices that closely reflect those of Euro-Canadians.

---

### MISTRUST OF INSTITUTIONS

- Historically, Indigenous people in Canada have been mistreated by major institutions, including the government, the RCMP, and the church. For many, this has led to a general mistrust of typical western institutions and hierarchies of power.

---

### NEXT STEPS

- For further insight into Indigenous Culture and realities in Canada, consider the following books:
  - From the Ashes - Jessie Thistle
  - Peace and Good Order - Harold R. Johnson
  - A Word of Hope for My Aboriginal People - Parry Stelter
  - Indian Horse - Richard Wagamense