Rooted in Medicines: Growing, Healing & Harm Reduction

A Culturally Grounded Tobacco Harm Reduction Guide for Indigenous Communities in New Brunswick

Guide Manual Overview

This guide is designed for health professionals, community wellness workers, and peer facilitators supporting adults (19+) who want to reduce or quit smoking or vaping nicotine/tobacco. It provides structured guidance to deliver the 8-week group-based program, adaptable for use in community centers, health hubs, friendship centers, or wellness programs.

- Choosing your own pace.
- Setting your own goals.
- Progress is meaningful.
- Healing is not a linear process.

The work focuses on reducing harm and building strength through culture, community, and choice.

It is a living workbook for facilitators, wellness staff, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers supporting Rooted in Medicines: Growing, Healing & Harm Reduction.
This workbook supports preparation, delivery, reflection, and continuity. It honours Indigenous ways of knowing, community adaptation, and non-linear healing.

This program is structured. It is also meant to breathe.
Adaptation is expected.

The purpose of this workbook is to help facilitators modify intentionally — without losing the spirit, teachings, or harm reduction foundation of the program.

This guide uses trauma-informed practices that support harm reduction. It helps create emotional, physical, and cultural safety. It supports trust, readiness, and steady participation. It prepares facilitators to meet participants with care, clarity, and respect. The Seven Sacred Teachings guide your actions.

- They support safe group work.
- They help you understand how to respond in moments of challenge.

- They help participants feel grounded in values that protect their spirit during change.

SEVEN SACRED TEACHINGS

- Love; The Eagle {Eagle icon}
- Encourages compassion for self and others. Love builds the trust needed for harm reduction.
- Respect: Moose {Moose icon}
- Honours boundaries and personal choice. Respect ensures participants feel control over their own journey.
- Courage: The Bear {Bear icon}
- Supports participants in facing fears, making changes, and continuing even after setbacks.
- Honesty: Glooscap {Glooscap icon}
- Builds authenticity in sharing and reflection. Honesty helps name challenges without shame.
- Wisdom: The Beaver {Beaver icon}
- Applies lived experience and cultural knowledge to support personal growth
- Humility: The Wolf {Wolf icon}
- Reminds us that healing is collective and that we all learn from each other.
- Truth: The Turtle {Turtle icon}
- Keeps us grounded in cultural teachings and in our commitments to harm reduction

These teachings support

- Harm reduction.
- They strengthen safety.
- They increase connection.
- They prepare people for change.

Throughout the guide, you will see the icons of the animals that represent these teachings, where at the various points in this journey, they can be part of the focus and bring both the participant and you into a place of understanding.

Whether you are new to harm reduction or have led smoking cessation programs before, this guide will walk you through:

- Program purpose and structure
- Session-by-session delivery & tips
- How to guide conversations around harm reduction
- Suggested language and facilitation techniques

- Links to videos and downloadable resources
- Being ready for any challenges that may be brought up - trauma prepared.

Note: Video tutorials and printable templates referenced throughout this guide are available via the Facilitator Toolkit (provided as a USB or downloadable link through the website or YouTube).

Program Overview

- Duration: 8 Weeks
- Sessions per Week: 2 (60-90 minutes each)
- In-person follow-up session at 3-4 months
- Group Size: Ideally 6-12 participants
- Facilitator Team: At least 1 facilitator + 1 Elder or Knowledge Keeper (Elder or Knowledge Keeper can be the facilitator)

Facilitation Tips

- Start with Relationship First- build the group to see each other as support, and this is a judgment-free group.
- Before focusing on smoking behaviours, build trust and cultural safety. Participants are more likely to open up once they feel seen, heard, and respected.
- Use Gentle, Open Language
- Instead of “quitting” or “addiction,” consider:
- “What brings you here?”
- “What would healing look like for you?”
- “What small steps feel possible today?”

Respect Readiness

- Each person’s relationship to smoking is different. Some may not be ready to reduce.
- Celebrate any movement forward—even reflection is progress.

Normalize Mistakes

- Frame this as part of the journey: “This isn’t about perfection—it’s about continuing to show up for yourself.”
- Invite Reflection—Don’t Force It
- Give participants space to journal, speak, or remain quiet. Some may engage more through actions (gardening, bundling) than words.

Facilitator Preparation Guide: Materials, Methods, and Community Adaptations

This section includes week-by-week supplies and facilitation instructions, required materials, and facilitation guidance for each session of Rooted in the Medicines: Growing Healing & Harm Reduction. It is intended for health professionals, harm reduction practitioners and community wellness staff delivering the program in collaboration with Indigenous communities.

For each session, you will find:

- A brief description of the activity's purpose and relevance
- A list of suggested materials and supplies
- Step-by-step facilitation instructions to support implementation
- Access to pre-recorded training videos demonstrating each activity
- Downloadable templates, patterns, and handouts for use with participants

Facilitators are encouraged to adapt activities, materials, and timelines to reflect local knowledge, available resources, cultural protocols, and seasonal considerations. The program follows a flexible, modular approach (Lego bricks) that is meant to honour community autonomy and build on existing strengths.

The Modification guide can be reused for each week within the program

Each week of this program has a focus — but how it unfolds will depend on:

- The time of year
- Community realities
- The needs of participants
- The capacity of facilitators and Elders
- The medicines available
- The emotional tone of the group

By completing this section before the week starts, you create space to:

- Anticipate challenges instead of reacting to them
- Adjust pacing thoughtfully
- Confirm supplies and supports
- Ensure cultural alignment
- Protect facilitator well-being

Modification should always protect:

- Cultural integrity

- Harm reduction principles
- Participant choice
- Trauma-informed safety

This guide is not prescriptive—it is a foundation. Adjustments that align with local teachings, plant availability, weather, or traditional practices are both expected and welcomed. Facilitators should feel supported in making the program relevant and responsive to the community they serve.

Facilitator Reflection

This work can be meaningful, but it can also be heavy at times. As a facilitator, you are holding space for others while moving through your own thoughts and feelings. You are not meant to do this alone. Creating your own support circle can help you stay grounded, cared for, and steady throughout the process. This circle might include co-facilitators, Elders, colleagues, mentors, or trusted people in your life who you can turn to for guidance, conversation, and support.

Facilitator Suggestions

- Reflect on the work and think about how it may impact you, both positively and negatively.
- Consider who you feel comfortable reaching out to when you need to talk, process, or simply not carry things alone.
- Include a mix of supports where possible:
- Someone who can listen and hold space
- An Elder or Knowledge Keeper for cultural guidance
- Colleagues or co-facilitators who understand the work and can share in debriefing
- Take time to talk with colleagues after sessions when needed—sharing experiences can help lighten the load and bring new perspective.
- Check in with yourself regularly and make space for rest, reflection, or grounding practices.
- Remember that caring for yourself is part of the work, and it helps you continue to show up in a good way for others.
- Setting up these supports before the program starts, so you having thing ready for yourself if challenges come up.

This reflection is meant to happen before the week begins, not during delivery.
The purpose is to slow down and think ahead. The Guide provides structure. This planning space ensures that the structure is intentionally shaped for your community before participants arrive.

Week 0 - Facilitator Preparation & Planting the Medicines {Moose icon} {Eagle icon} {Beaver icon}

Timing: 4-6 weeks before participant sessions begin (see checklist)

In the weeks leading up to the program, the week 0 work will help you be ready to support healing.

- Helping you to build safety.
- Ready to build relationships and relationships with those medicines.

Getting the Garden Ready

By planting and tending sacred or supportive plants in advance, facilitators model the values of patience, care, and intention that will be shared with participants. It also helps ensure that living plants, fresh herbs, or dried materials are available for use during key activities. In the hopes that this allows for the program to have ready-made solutions to any challenges that may arise (where will the plants be kept if it can't be kept at home, how will someone access them during the program).

- Identify the medicinal plants available in your community that are culturally relevant, or determine a way to access some (see appendix information)
- Plan planting or sourcing according to seasonal availability to ensure freshness and usability.
- Prepare and maintain the plants in advance, modelling patience, care, and intention.
- Determine storage solutions for plants that cannot be kept at home, ensuring accessibility during program activities.
- Develop a system for participants and facilitators to access plants during sessions, including backup or alternative materials if needed.

Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach

A trauma-informed approach supports harm reduction. Many participants will carry some trauma. This should not be treated as a failing point or have any reflection on them as individuals. It reflects a history, environment, and experience that have resulted from trauma, both lived and generational.

Your role is to create safety by *(there will be links to other resources that go into greater detail about this).*

- **Support physical, emotional, and cultural safety.** Create steady conditions for people to speak, reflect, and try new steps without fear. Respect local teachings and follow community guidance.
- **Building trust.** Show up, listen, and follow through on your commitments. Let time and consistency shape the relationship.
- **Create choice.** Offer clear options that match a person's goals and values. Let people set their own pace.

- **Respect each person's relationship to smoking and vaping.** Listen to their story and the role tobacco or nicotine plays in their life. Respond in a way that honours their experiences.
- **Help guide.** Share tools, teachings, and supports that fit the person in front of you. Walk with them as they explore change- you don't tell them where to walk.
- **Do not push.** Give space for each person to decide what comes next. Support their direction, even when progress moves in small steps.

Participants may face silence, relapse, or withdrawal. These are common. These are not signs of failure. These are signs of healing in motion.

The Seven Sacred Teachings guide your actions. They support safe group work. They help you understand how to respond in moments of challenge. They help participants feel grounded in values that protect their spirit during change.

SEVEN SACRED TEACHINGS LEGEND

Love (Eagle): Encourages compassion for self and others. Love builds the trust needed for harm reduction. {Eagle icon}

Respect (Moose): Honours boundaries and personal choice. Respect ensures participants feel control over their own journey. {Moose icon}

Courage (Bear): Supports participants in facing their fears, making changes, and continuing even after setbacks. {Bear icon}

Honesty (Glooscap): Builds authenticity in sharing and reflection. Honesty helps name challenges without shame. {Glooscap icon}

Wisdom (Beaver): Applies lived experience and cultural knowledge to support personal growth. {Beaver icon}

Humility (Wolf): Reminds us that healing is collective and that we all learn from each other. {Wolf icon}

Truth (Turtle): Keeps us grounded in cultural teachings and in our commitments to harm reduction. {Turtle icon}

These teachings support an approach to change, recognizing that it can cause trauma to appear for people taking part in the program. Being trauma-informed involves having cultural competence regarding the traditions and practices and using them to help in the journey of healing.

They strengthen safety. They increase connection. They prepare people for change.

- Center self-determination.
- Recognize that trauma may come from colonial violence, residential schools, family dynamics, or community history.

- Offer clear choices in cultural activities.
- Be willing to work with people as they are, with zero judgment

Communication

Use simple, respectful, and direct language. Begin and end sessions with grounding. Smudge, breathwork, or silence may support this. Offer the choice to pass. Follow up privately after hard disclosures. Debrief with co facilitators. Seek guidance from Elders.

Support Network

Confirm mental health support. Identify backup supports. Build respectful relationships with Elders or Knowledge Keepers. Include peer mentors when possible and inform people taking part about the resources related to trauma and cessation resources at the start of the program.

Cultural Competence

Model the teachings in your actions.

Love supports compassion.
Respect supports boundaries.
Courage supports change.
Honesty supports truth in reflection.
Wisdom supports thoughtful guidance.
Humility supports shared learning.
Truth supports alignment with traditional and harm reduction values.

Space and Environment

Use a welcoming space. Use circle seating. Provide a quiet room. Display crisis numbers. Create agreements. Offer grounding. Use peer mentors. Encourage harm reduction goals. Recognize relapse. Offer nicotine replacement therapy or referrals.

Take Aways

- Leverage those personal and ceremonial relationships you have within the community or yourself to help understand the landscape of traditional medicines available to you (e.g., tobacco, mint, sweetgrass, cedar, red willow)
- Prepare growing spaces or harvest sites for the program

- Ground yourself as a facilitator in the rhythms and teachings of growth, before teaching others
- Ensure availability of dried or living plant materials for the first 4 weeks of programming
- Reflect on your own goals, hopes, and capacity as a knowledge-holder, helper, and harm reduction practitioner

Pre-Week Planning Modifications

1. What is likely needed in this community during this week of the program?
Consider seasonal changes, community events, known stressors, transportation barriers, and weather realities.

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2. What adaptations may be needed before this week begins?
Consider adjusting session length, simplifying or expanding activities, substituting medicines, adjusting language, adding grounding time, or planning additional 1:1 check-ins.

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3. What support do facilitators and Elders need before this week starts?
Consider role clarity, debrief scheduling, emotional or cultural supports, supply preparation, and referral confirmation.

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4. What space is required to do the planting, based on seasons and space? What alternative plan do you have if a participant can't grow the medicines at home?

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Confirmation Before Week Begins

☐ Supplies confirmed
☐ Space confirmed
☐ Elder availability confirmed
☐ Crisis supports confirmed

☐ Adjustments agreed upon
☐ Debrief time scheduled
☐ Seed Acquired or alternative action for planting

Other Notes

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Week 1 - Intentions, Sacred Teachings & Starting the Journey
Session 1: Understanding Sacred vs. Commercial Tobacco - Building Intentions
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Bear icon}, {Glooscap icon}, {Eagle icon}

Opening Ceremony:

- Elder-led prayer, grounding, and introduction to the program's purpose

Teachings:

- Sacred vs. commercial tobacco (cultural significance vs. addictive harm)
- Intention-setting: "What brings you here? What would healing look like for you?" What are your goals? What does success look like for you?

Activity:

- Create personalized medicine pouches Prompt: "What are some things you want to add to your pouch? Bring them next time."
- Option: Introduce self-tracking (Guide Book

Harm Reduction Discussion:

- "How can small changes (e.g., holding medicine instead of smoking) build toward your goal?"

Resources:

- Sacred vs. commercial tobacco (Health impacts - understanding the difference?)
- Build your support circle: Elders, friends, peers who've walked this path or can help you with yours - task between meetings - reach out to them and talk to them about your new journey - a list- action to write it down or talk to the people who can support you.

Supplies Needed:

- Felt or soft cloth squares (6-8 inches)
- Leather cord, sinew, or string
- Scissors or hole punch
- Index cards or paper
- Journals or a small box for reflections

Facilitation Instructions:

- Cut the fabric into circles using the downloadable pattern from the Facilitator Toolkit.
- Punch small holes around the edge of the circle using scissors or a hole punch.
- Thread the cord through the holes to form a pouch.
- Participants will place medicine or symbols of intention inside as the program continues.

Facilitator Debrief
What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Session 2: Cedar Bath - Releasing & Grounding
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Glooscap icon} {Eagle icon}
Teachings:

- Cedar's cleansing and calming properties
- This journey is yours—non-linear, with space for mistakes and growth- what are some challenges for you? What steps can you take now to limit their impact on your healing journey?

Activity:

- Guided cedar foot bath + personal reflection:
- "What do you wish to release? What do you want to nurture?"

Activity

- Introduction of local medicines (e.g., red willow, mint, sweetgrass)
- What each one does and how it can be used to help on this journey
- Adding to the “Medicine Pouch”: help to define more things within yourself and the tools you have available to you on this journey.
- Add cedar or another plant that resonates with your journey

Resources:

- Guide to local plants and medicines - and how to use them (recipe to make tea?)
- List of supportive Elders/knowledge keepers who may have more information within your community

Harm Reduction Discussion:

- How can we start to replace smoking with traditional medicine - what would that look like for you? Making tea vs having a smoke?

End-of-Week Take-Home Activity:

- If you are able, try and make tea once when you have the urge to have a smoke- think about how it made you feel having the tea vs smoking (there is no right number of times doing it, once or 12 times is still an amazing step on your healing journey).

Supplies Needed:

- Dried cedar
- Warm water basins or foot tubs
- Towels
- Local medicines (mint, sweetgrass, red willow)
- Cloth for adding medicine to pouches

Facilitation Instructions:

- Prepare foot baths basins with warm water and a handful of cedar.
- Guide a quiet reflection or grounding during the soak.

Introduce local plant medicines.

- Allow participants to smell, handle, and learn about their uses.
- Add a medicine of choice to each person’s pouch

End-of-Week Take-Home Activity:

- If you are able, try and make tea once when you have the urge to have a smoke- think about how it made you feel having the tea vs smoking (there is no right number of times doing it, once or 12 times is still an amazing step on your healing journey).

Instructional Video: Watch 'Using Cedar for Foot Baths & Reflection' and 'Introducing Local Medicines' in the Facilitator Toolkit. - one or both?

Facilitator Debrief

What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Week 2 - Growing Medicines & Replacing Habits

Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Beaver icon}, {Moose icon}, {Turtle icon}

Session 3: Planting Medicines - Rituals & Resilience

Teachings:

- Gardening as healing - resilience, patience, failure
- How does tending medicines mimic tending to yourself?

Activity:

- Share how your take-home activity went- was there anything you noticed about yourself and how your relationship with smoking impacts your life?
- Plant sacred tobacco or accessible alternatives (mint, sweetgrass) - either at community gardens or in small planters at home (inexpensive ways to grow at home resource - milk carton)
- Options for year-round growing: windowsills, center-based planters
- Talk about “effort over perfection”: Even if plants don’t grow, your care matters (see below for more details)

Harm Reduction Discussion:

- “How might tending to medicines replace a smoke break or vape session?”
- Why is looking after yourself important to your community's health?

Resources:

- Seeds and care guides (one see appendix and website)

Supplies Needed:

- Starter pots (milk cartons, yogurt containers, recycled items)
- Potting soil or local soil mix
- Seeds (sacred tobacco, mint, sweetgrass)
- Watering cans or cups

Facilitation Instructions:

- Distribute containers and help participants label their names or intentions.
- Add soil and plant seeds, explaining plant depth and sunlight needs.
- Explain how caring for plants parallels self-care in a healing journey.

Cultural Framing: Effort over perfection (this was done with research - just using as a reference, the group can change as much of this as needs to be)

Healing is viewed as a process, not a destination. It moves in cycles. It allows for rest, setbacks, and re-commitment. This aligns directly with harm reduction principles, which honour any positive step someone takes to reduce harm in their life—even if they haven't stopped entirely.
Draw a parallel between planting medicines and reducing commercial tobacco use:

- Not every seed will sprout—and not every craving will be avoided.
- Some plants may struggle—and so will we.
- But when we show up with care, that effort holds meaning.

As participants begin planting mint, sweetgrass, or sacred tobacco, you might say:

- "Just like your garden might not grow perfectly, your healing might not be perfect either—and that's okay."
- "The medicines see your effort. Every time you choose tea instead of a smoke, breathe instead of vape, or even just pause to reflect before lighting up—that is medicine too."
- "Some weeks, you'll feel strong. Other weeks, you may struggle. That's not failure. That's part of the growing process."

This teaches that setbacks aren't signs of failure—they're part of a relationship we're rebuilding with our body, our spirit, and the land. Just like medicines grow slowly and need different conditions to thrive, so does healing from dependence.

Harm Reduction Alignment
This also affirms core harm reduction values:

- Progress over perfection: Any reduction in use, or any increased awareness, is a meaningful step.
- Compassion and agency: Participants define their own goals and pace.
- Cultural grounding: Returning to traditional medicines like mint or cedar for support replaces harmful habits with culturally rooted practices.

Facilitator Debrief
What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Session 4: Breath & Seasons - Building New Routines
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Moose icon}, {Turtle icon}
Teachings:

- Breathwork led by Elder (video or live)
- Introduction to using cedar/sage/mint to soothe cravings with breath work (How will that work? What does that look like?)

Activity:

- Make medicine support bundles (e.g., cedar + dried medicine)
- Group talk: What triggers exist? How can we respond instead of react?

Harm Reduction Discussion:

- What helped in the past when you tried to cut down or quit? What didn't? What can you learn from those experiences to help you this time?
- Have you noticed times/activities/situations that challenge your healing journey the most? What are they? (This can be done as a discussion, sharing, or in a journal)

Supplies Needed:

- Dried cedar, mint, or sage
- Small fabric pieces and string for bundles
- Markers or labels for identifying contents

Facilitation Instructions:

- Facilitate breathwork using medicine bundles (inhale scent during focused breathing). Facilitation details will be provided in the video guide. to be filled in based on recording.
- Discuss common triggers and brainstorm calming responses.
- Create medicine support bundles with dried medicine.
- Instructional Video: Watch 'Breathwork with Medicine Bundles'

End-of-Week Take-Home Activity:

- Choose one small ceremony (e.g., smudge, tea with prayer, lighting a candle) to try during the week when you feel cravings or stress. Write down how it made you feel?

Video: Breathwork led by Elder (video or live)

Facilitator Debrief

What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Week 3 - Medicines & Mindfulness

Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Wolf icon}, {Eagle icon}

Check-In: How did it go between meetings? What worked? What didn't (group sharing to see overlapping experiences and to learn various ways to approach reducing dependence on smoking)

Session 5: Seasonal Medicines - Planning for Inner Growth

Teachings:

- Medicine Wheel: each season teaches something new - each season presents new challenges. (blank medicine wheel in participates guide)
- What do you need to grow—internally and externally—to support change?

Activity:

- Share (if anyone wants to) how your take-home activity went? What did you learn about your cravings?
- Create a seasonal growing chart with medicines + personal growth reflections
- Create bundles to be dried at home for making tea
- Where can people get seeds from your community or other sources (sometimes help comes from within or external to your community).
- Update your "contact list" to add people who are there for different challenges (seasons) or people who were not able to support you at this point.

Harm Reduction Discussion:

- "What routines could I transform with new habits like tea, smudging, or plant care?"
- "What qualities do I want to nurture this season?"

Supplies Needed:

- Large chart paper or seasonal templates
- Markers and stickers
- Medicine seed catalogues or local seed guides

Facilitation Instructions:

- Create a chart divided by seasons and discuss what each season teaches.
- Match medicine-growing goals with personal growth reflections.

- Support participants in identifying what they want to grow inside and out.

Facilitator Debrief
What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Session 6: Harvesting & Using Medicines for Wellness
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Beaver icon}, {Eagle icon}
Teachings:

- Cultural harvesting: intention, respect, community sharing
- How can medicines be used every day: how are they used, teas, smudge, bundles, etc- what do you want to explore to help on your journey?

Activity:

- Group Tea Chat - Blend teas for relaxation/craving support- if people want to talk about some challenges over the last week and how they dealt with them - focus on the wins via challenges
- Prepare drying bundles or explore uses for dried medicines

Resources:

- Tea recipe cards
- Harvesting guidelines

Supplies Needed:

- Fresh or dried traditional medicines (e.g., mint, cedar, sweetgrass)
- Tea recipe cards (printed or digital)

- Harvesting guidelines handout explaining ethical, respectful, and sustainable harvesting
- Twine or string for drying bundles
- Jars, bowls, or bags for tea blending and storage

Facilitator Instructions:

- Review cultural harvesting guidelines with participants, emphasizing intention, respect, and sharing.
- Use a recorded video or live demonstration to show harvesting, drying, and bundling techniques with local plants.
- Facilitate the Group Tea Chat, encouraging participants to blend teas and discuss their experiences from the week.
- Guide participants in preparing drying bundles, explaining various uses for dried herbs and medicines.
- Encourage open discussions about how traditional medicines support their healing journey.

End-of-Week Take-Home Activity:

- Putting it together - when the urge to smoke hits - let's try and combine the breathing with some tea- start the process of developing what works for you- have tea ready to drink for those moments or try breathing activity, then go make some tea afterwards

Facilitator Debrief

What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Week 4 - Daily Practice as Healing
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Moose icon}
Session 7: Everyday Care as Self-Care

Teachings:

- Tending to your plants = tending to yourself - it's a daily act of love and mindfulness
- Additional mindfulness practices (to be defined based on community needs)

Activity:

- How did the finding your own path (process) go for you?
- Create plant markers in Indigenous languages or what the plants have meant to you on your healing journey
- Create a "what the plants have done for you" - create your stories about how you use the medicines, so you tell your story back to yourself (your journey or to others or what are you learning- reflective on the journey)

Discussion:

- Halfway Wins Circle: Share small and big successes, surprises
- "How process of healing and learning affected your cravings or mindset?"

Supplies Needed:

- Plant markers (wood, card stock, popsicle sticks)
- Permanent markers
- Blank booklets or large paper for storytelling

Facilitation Instructions:

- Label plants in Indigenous languages or with purpose (e.g., "growth," "strength").
- Reflect on plant and personal care as daily self-love.
- Start a self-storybook about using medicines or gardening to support change.

Supplies Needed:

- Watering cans, gloves
- Early harvest medicines (mint, lemon balm)
- Mugs, hot water for tea

Facilitation Instructions:

- Group garden together (weeding, watering, plant check-ins).
- Make tea to share stories and reflections.
- Reflect on the connection between plant growth and personal healing.

Facilitator Debrief

What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Session 8: Group Gardening & Harvest Teas
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Bear icon} {Glooscap icon}

Activity:

- Group garden care (water, weed, check plants)- what are some things you need (self-care, community assets to help), what are you not getting, that you need?
- Harvest early teas (e.g., mint) and make tea for the circle - steps to a harvest?

Reflection:

- “What have the medicines taught you so far?”
- “Where are you seeing growth in yourself?”

Supplies Needed:

- Gardening tools (trowels, gloves, watering cans)
- Harvestable herbs (mint, etc.)
- Boiling water and tea materials

Instructions:

- Visit the garden for a group tending activity.
- Harvest early herbs for tea, noting their healing properties.
- Guide a tea sharing circle focused on growth and gratitude.
- Encourage the group to reflect on self and plant transformation.

Facilitator Debrief

What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Week 5 - Ceremony & Community Connection
Session 9: Ceremony as Harm Reduction - Making Meaningful Ritual
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Turtle icon}

Teachings:

- Ceremony can be an anchor in times of struggle - smudging, foot baths, sweetgrass braiding, prayer ties
- Smoking/vaping is sometimes misused during or after ceremony—how do we reclaim tobacco in its sacred form?
- Protocols for sweat lodges or fasts: challenges with cravings and how to prepare for them ★ (Elder insight needed) - possible to invite band members to help with policy?

Activity:

- Group ceremony (choose what fits your group/community: smudge, sweetgrass braid, cedar circle, prayer tie creation)
- Talk about what personal ceremonies participants might build into their days (e.g., morning tea, garden visit, something to change the behavior)
- The introduction of a group legacy project- something the group can do to improve the community or help the next group to reduce their dependence on smoking and vaping
- What could that be? What would that look like?

Discussion:

- “What ceremonies or habits speak to you?”
- Invite each participant to share or reflect on what ceremony means to them.

- “Can you build your own small daily rituals to replace or support you during cravings?”

Harm Reduction Focus:

- Perfection is not required. Ceremonies can ground you in your values even during difficult moments.

Supplies Needed:

- Red cloth and thread (for prayer ties)
- Sacred medicines (sweetgrass, sage, cedar)
- Space for circle or smudging

Facilitation Instructions:

- Prepare ceremony space with participants.
- Guide the making of sweetgrass braids or prayer ties.

Facilitator Debrief

What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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*** Space for notes at least a half a page

Session 10: Peer Support & Resilience

Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Eagle icon} Beaver icon}

Teachings:

- Our strength grows in community
- Healing is easier when we’re not doing it alone
- Sharing stories supports everyone’s journey
- Resilience is not about “never falling,” but about continuing to stand back

Activity:

- Letter to Future Self:
- Prompt: “What would I tell the version of me just starting out on this healing journey?”
- Include encouragement, reminders, or a vision for your future self.
- These can be sealed and returned at the end of the program or at a later date.

Resilience Sharing Circle:

- Voluntary group sharing of hard moments and what helped get through them.
- Invite a past participant or Elder to share their story of struggle and growth (if other community members have changed their relationship with tobacco and/or vaping).
- Affirmation: “Your story may be the medicine someone else needs.”

Legacy Project Brainstorm (continued from Session 9):

- How could we support the next group or community members on their healing journey?
- Examples:
- Healing garden or tea bundles
- Mini-zine or storybook with teachings from this group
- A tobacco pouch kit for new participants
- Begin narrowing ideas for next week’s planning

Discussion:

- “Who has supported you the most so far?” How can you let them know that it has been helpful?
- “What’s something you’ve learned that might help someone else?”
- “Would you want to walk with someone else on this journey in the future?” (Peer mentor reflection)

Harm Reduction Discussion:

- Resilience and healing are strengthened through relationships, not isolation.
- Peer support is a powerful tool in reducing harm—it reminds us that we are not alone, even in our struggles.
- Harm reduction is not only about avoiding substances, but about building lives rich with connection, purpose, and culture.

Supplies Needed:

- Paper and envelopes for letters to future self
- Notebook or booklet for sharing stories
- Optional: guest speaker or past participant

Facilitation Instructions:

- Facilitate writing letters to future selves for return at end-of-program.
- Host a resilience sharing circle.

- Continue work on a legacy project or brainstorm ideas for peer mentorship.

End-of-Week Take-Home Activity:

- “Build Your Own Ritual - A Daily Anchor” Ceremony can be small, simple, and deeply personal. It doesn’t have to be formal to be powerful. This week, your take-home activity is to create one small ritual that you can use when you feel a craving, need to ground yourself, or just want to reconnect with your purpose.

Facilitator Debrief
What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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*** Space for notes at least a half a page

Week 6 - Coping & Staying Strong
Session 11: Triggers & Tough Moments
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Bear icon}, {Wolf icon}, {Moose icon}

Teachings:

- Common triggers: social pressure, boredom, grief, anger, weather/seasons
- Preparation helps make the hard moments more manageable
- Self-awareness is power- what are your triggers- what have you learned that can be used to avoid them?

Activity:

- Role-play real-life challenges:
- Someone offers you a smoke
- Family member smokes around you
- You’re alone and craving

- Make a personal “Crisis Toolkit”:
- Using items throughout this process or activities you can draw upon- having them ready for challenges is not a representation of failure, it is just being ready for those hard moments.
- Support contacts (family, Elders, mentors)
- Setting yourself up for success makes those challenges a bit easier.

Discussion:

- “What patterns do you see in tough moments?”
- “What helps you feel grounded again?”
- “What routines do you associate with using?
- Determine the legacy project and assign who will be responsible for the parts of the project.

Harm Reduction Discussion:

- Mistakes are not failures—how we respond is what matters most.

Supplies Needed:

- Sample tea blends or calming bundles
- Small items for pouch toolkit (stone, feather, medicine)
- Crisis toolkit worksheet template

Facilitation Instructions:

- Discuss and role-play common challenges (e.g., social pressure, cravings).
- Build a personal crisis toolkit with sensory supports.
- Identify patterns and reframe past setbacks as learning.

Instructional Video: Watch 'How to Build a Personal Healing Toolkit'.
Facilitator Debrief
What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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*** Space for notes at least a half a page

Session 12: Re-Rooting - Reflecting on Intentions
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Wolf icon}, {Moose icon}

Activity:

- Revisit your goals from Week 1:
- How have they changed?
- What feels realistic now?
- Optional 1:1 check-ins (peer or facilitator) to adjust goals or recommit
- Finalize group legacy project
- Make a list of the things you will need for the project (the next 3 meetings will be focused on this)
- Divide up who is getting what parts of the project (the goal is to use things with little to no cost)
- Invite youth community to help with the gardening of the plants (if possible- or pass along growing pots to schools, community groups, as a way to share the knowledge you have gained during this process) - Youth-focused healing gardening
- Art or booklet with teachings and personal stories about your journey (there is no wrong way to do this)
- Plant + story bundles for other people starting their journey

Harm Reduction Discussion:

- “What does strength look like to you now?”
- “How has your understanding of healing changed?”
- Healing journeys evolve. Redefining your goals is a sign of self-awareness—not giving up.

End-of-Week Take-Home Activity:

- Add a reminder to your space (home, car, medicine pouch) of your “why”—your reason for continuing this healing journey. Something that will visually remind you why you are making these changes.

Supplies Needed:

- Original intention journals or goals from Week 1
- Markers or vision boards
- Self-check worksheets

Facilitation Instructions:

- Revisit original goals and assess changes.
- Create new goals or recommit to current intentions.

- Support 1:1 check-ins for peer or facilitator reflection.

End-of-Week Take-Home Activity:

- Add a reminder to your space (home, car, medicine pouch) of your "why"—your reason for continuing this healing journey.

Facilitator Debrief

What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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Week 7 - Sharing Knowledge & Legacy
Session 13/ 14: Passing the Teachings On
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Wolf icon}, {Eagle icon}, {Moose icon}

Teachings:

- Teachings will be finalized with Elder input.

Activity:

- How did defining your space with reminders work- was it helpful
- Work on the legacy project
- Decide how and where to share it (social media, school, community event)
- Make signage or storytelling pieces from the garden (e.g., "This plant helps with calming" or "Grown with love for the next generation.")

Discussion:

- "How has this process changed (or not changed) your relationship with tobacco or vaping?"

Harm Reduction Focus:

- Sharing knowledge helps beyond individual journeys and builds resilience in the community (there isn't a right amount visualize a bucket of water, every drop helps to fill it). Do you see a role within your community to help share what you have learned on this process- who can you talk to about making that happen.
  Supplies Needed:
- Whatever was identified for the group project.
  Facilitation Instructions:

Help with the process of the legacy project - not taking over but assisting when needed, not solving problems that come up, but helping with paths forward for solutions to issues that arise.

Facilitator Debrief

- What felt powerful?

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  What felt heavy?

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  Did any modification work as expected?

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  What needs adjustment before next week?

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  What support is needed before the next session?

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Week 8 - Celebration & Looking Ahead
Session 15: Gratitude Circle & Feast
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Eagle icon}

Activity:

- Finish the legacy project

Story Circle:

- Share your proudest moment
- Share what changed for you
- Talk about gratitude for others in the group and those who have helped

Recognition:

- Present certificates or medicine bundles (something that fits for the group and the process, something that was impactful for them in this process).

Harm Reduction Focus:

- Celebration of progress reminds us that healing is possible and powerful

Facilitation Instructions:

- Begin to focus on with the group that, while this phase in the process is nearing its end, it is only a part of the story they are telling. They can continue to meet as a group or take with them what they have learned and use it in any way they can; it is another chapter in their story, not the end of the book.

Facilitator Debrief

What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Did any modification work as expected?

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What needs adjustment before next week?

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What support is needed before the next session?

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Session 16: Preparing for the Future - Staying Rooted
Seven Sacred Teaching focuses: {Wolf icon} {Moose icon}

Teachings:

- Something from the group on what would be the best way to tie it all together

Activity:

- Closing ceremony: guided by Elder ★-Share a meal with medicines from the journey (if possible) and those that helped you along this journey.

Group planning for next steps:

- When will you meet again?
- What does ongoing support look like?

- Will the garden be revisited or harvested together?
- The group can still work together on the next steps and meet at other points to help each other as they continue to grow

Worksheet:

- “What I’ve Grown” (internal + external growth)
- Create a personal plan to help when challenges come up - reinforcing that you may take steps back, but that is ok, as long as you keep trying to move forward.

Resources: (possible)

- Contact sheet (facilitators, Elders, peers)
- Online/phone support options
- Follow-up event info (Harvest Circle)

Discussion:

- “How do we stay connected?”
- “What do you still want to grow?”

Final Take-Home Activity:

- Write yourself a note or record a message to open at the 3-4 month harvest

follow-up or at a time you are being challenged during your journey.

- Plant a final seed (literal or symbolic) to carry your journey forward. This is just the beginning, not the end.

Facilitator Debrief
What felt powerful?

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What felt heavy?

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Carrying the Teachings Forward – Background & Purpose

This section provides context for the reflection pages titled 'Learning From This Group – What We Changed & Why' and 'Facilitator Reflection After Community Project Completion.'

Why This Section Matters

- Rooted in Medicines is not meant to be delivered the same way every time.
- Each group brings different strengths. Each community is in a different season. Each facilitator learns something new.
- This section exists to ensure that learning is not lost.
- It is not an evaluation tool. It is not for funders. It is not about proving success.
- It is about stewardship.
- When facilitators take time to reflect on what changed, what worked, and what felt challenging, they are helping the program grow wiser. They are contributing to a living body of knowledge that strengthens future groups.

Sharing this section with whoever runs the program next:

- Reduces repeated mistakes
- Preserves cultural adaptations that worked well
- Passes along hard-earned insight
- Supports smoother transitions when staff change
- Keeps the program rooted in community reality

Without this reflection, each new facilitator starts from scratch. With it, they begin with guidance.

- This is how teachings are carried forward in a good way.
- Learning From This Group – What We Changed & Why
- This section documents how the program was shaped for a specific group. Adaptations are not deviations — they are signs that the work was responsive.

***** there will be space between each of the below sections to write down notes***
Recording what was changed and why helps the next facilitator understand:

- What adaptations were intentional
- What community realities influenced decisions
- What should be preserved

- What should be reconsidered
- These reflections become part of the program's memory.
- Facilitator Reflection After Community Project Completion
- Notes

  _____
  _____
  _____

The community project is often where learning becomes visible. It is also where challenges surface — leadership shifts, time pressure, emotional intensity, or capacity strain.
Notes

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This reflection helps facilitators step back after completion and ask:

- What felt aligned?
- What felt heavy?
- What surprised us?
- What would we prepare differently next time?

Notes

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Facilitator-to-Facilitator Notes are especially important. This is a direct message to the next person holding this work.
It may include:

- Suggestions about pacing
- Reminders about emotional load
- Cultural considerations
- Encouragement

This is how continuity is built. This is how responsibility is shared. This is how the program remains community-led rather than person-dependent.

Notes

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_____
_____

Participants Who Wish to Support Future Groups

Name (optional): _____

Role(s) of interest: _____

Strengths / teachings they wish to share:

_____

Boundaries to respect:

_____

When to reconnect:

_____