



# Land Knowledge Circles

## How to do a Talking Circle

**Understandings:** We come together with the understanding that time spent together is an investment. We come together with the willingness to share our truth. We come together with the intention to hear and learn from others. We come together with an open heart, knowing that we are all interconnected and equal.

**Preparation:** At many Circle gatherings those attending will be asked to participate in a smudge ceremony, where sacred medicine of sage or sweet grass is lit and the smoke is fanned and directed over ourselves to cleanse our bodies, minds, and spirits in preparation for the Circle. It is customary to remove glasses, watches, and any adornments for the smudge. ***Just be yourself!***

### General Conduct:

- All that speak within the Circle, speak to all within the Circle. Therefore, words are spoken to all and not directed at any one individual. Words spoken are to benefit the greater good; to share honestly; and not for self-promotion.
- Within the Circle there is no hierarchy. Everyone within the Circle is equal.
- The sacred object (feather) is held at all times and at no time is the sacred object dropped or put down, or misplaced.

### Process

1. **Opening prayers** are spoken by the designate Elder or Chair. Prayers are said to the One Almighty Creator in order to thank Him for the gathering and to invite His Presence and Love into the circle.
2. After the prayer, in the opening statements, it is customary to recognize the **Traditional Territory/Land** where the Circle gathering is being held.
3. The **sacred object** of the Circle is introduced (often a feather; and the bird chosen, is done so as it carries a certain spirit or medicine to help focus our thoughts and words).
4. The Chair or Elder initiates the discussions by **introducing the topic**. The chair(s)/Elder(s) may also offer insight on the topic as well, as they are an equal participant in the Circle.
5. The **feather is passed** to the first person, clockwise from the Chair.
6. Holding the feather, the participant **introduces themselves** to the Circle. (Larger Circles may require that participants say their names and identify their role and place of origin each time).
7. Holding the feather, each participant **shares Knowledge** in the Circle; considerate of time and of others.
8. The **feather is then passed** to the next person in a clockwise direction:

### Passing the feather

***The feather is passed with the right hand to the next, who receives it with their left hand. When the sacred feather object is passed to the next person it is passed with the knowledge that we are all interconnected and related. It is also passed with the knowledge that it is all of our ancestors, relatives, and acquaintances, that have made us who we are. Therefore, when we pass the feather, it is passed with all these relations, and the individual will say to the next in the Circle as they pass the feather: "All my relations".***

9. The recipient acknowledges what was said before and adds their own words and Knowledge. In this way the Circle continues.
10. At the close, the Elder or chair says a closing prayer in gratitude.

