




Acknowledgements

- We would like to acknowledge the traditional territories of the local Indigenous tribes
- Phyllis Lee and the staff of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance

Please interrupt me with any experiences that you would like to share or questions that you have. Dialogue is crucial for this coaching.

Disclaimer: Sharing our own personal teachings and experiences. Individuals carry their own teachings.



- Instructor Cindy Crowe
- “Standing Strong” is my Spiritual name and my clan is Caribou
- Lodge Keeper for Grey Wolf/Blue Sky Traditional Teaching Lodge
- Sharing my own personal teachings and experiences
- Individuals carry their own teachings as per their teachers

- *Memashkegaabowek ndizhinikaaz*
- *Adik ndoodem*

The Basics

- an introduction through a mutual contact or a cold introduction;
- a getting-to-know each other on a human level first;
- the development of a relationship built on values of honesty and trust;
- the fostering of that trust relationship built on a reasonable period of time, and;
- then finally a confidence has been established with that relationship.

Think About It

Think about your working relationship with your doctor, your hairdresser, your babysitter, your mechanic and so on. Keep in mind that in many cases, the First Nation has not yet had a productive relationship with a government or industry representative. The fostering of a working relationship will take time.

Communication Tips!

- Relationship building is the most important aspect of working with an Indigenous person
- Some people EXPECT to work with Indigenous people; like beginning any partnership with an individual or community, one must ASK to work together and not assume that this will happen
- Speak to the person at their level, do not talk down to them, (at first) talk to them about the human aspects of yourself not the business at hand

Communication Tips!

- Do not expect an Indigenous person to look into your eyes when speaking to you
- If the Indigenous person is looking down or speaking very softly, this is a sign of respect and not to be mistaken for lack of disrespect or fear
- Possibly soft spoken (do they speak English?)
- Humour is important. *Anishinabek* like to have fun just like anyone else!
- Food is a common denominator of us all and is a great way to get to know someone
- Indigenous people are very sensitive to non-verbal communication. Be aware of your body language

Communication Tips!

- Documentation is a foreign concept and can be quite stressful, always assist the person with the required documentation, do it with them
- Many Indigenous people teach through stories:
 - If you ask a question, you may not receive a *direct* answer (be patient as the answer unfolds or you understand later – do not put pressure on person to provide direct answer)
 - May be frustrating for you, take a long time to respond to a question and silence is okay . . . **patience is very important in Indigenous societies!**

Communication Tips!

- Indigenous cultures look at 'everything' in a holistic manner (spiritual, mental, physical and emotional).
- Share everything – a concept woven into all things including business - If you were welcomed into an *Anishnaabe* home, you would be given the best bed, best food and treated as a very important guest (even if that means somebody else goes without)
- Cultural activities are a priority (i.e., hunts, annual gatherings, powwows, memorials, feasts, ceremonies, etc.), which needs to be recognized

Understanding Your Clients

- Cultures are different, so men's and women's roles may be dissimilar to what is 'typical'
- Feasting is usually involved with any gathering; everything is shared (derives from **thousands** of years of depending upon each other)
- Indian time – there is a time to rest, eat, hunt etc.
- Stereo typical perception of Anishinabek as a 'drunken Indian' on the street corner
- Not viewed as proud peoples by many non-Indigenous Canadians through impressions of urban encounters (where many non-Indigenous people are also troubled)

- Are you encountering anger?
- Residential School Syndrome – very little research at this point (health providers describe as post traumatic stress syndrome)
- Children, grandchildren are experiencing fall-out
- Displaced anger - mad but don't know what they are angry about
- Unless you have experienced this, it is difficult to understand (e.g., even service providers may not be equipped)
- Want to be heard, want someone to listen to them and have trouble voicing issues
- The people who need the most help don't recognize that they need it
- **You haven't done anything wrong!**

- Oppression is often a problem with individual Indigenous people and within some communities
- Views that other members of Canadian society have things better: May result in drug or alcohol dependency, Suicides, Bad behaviour in children/teens, Reverse racism i.e. white man
- Indigenous people are seen as having **MANY** advantages (i.e., don't pay taxes, all get their education paid for, unending supply of funding to the communities)
- In reality, most Indigenous people in Canada live below the poverty line and under very basic conditions (no indoor plumbing, etc.), view <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-28Z93hCOI>

Getting Started

- 1. **Face-to-face contact** is always preferred;
- 2. **Check with colleagues** and/or **political organizations** for community/organization contact;
- 3. Contacting the tribal council or the political territorial organization to **do some initial research**;
- 4. Protocol dictates that you would **speak to leadership in the community/organization first**;
- 5. Chief & Council or ED if interested will usually **give you a contact to work with**;

Scheduling Meetings

- 6. Generally speaking, **road accessible communities led by leadership / remote communities led by community**;
- 7. Community/organization front line workers are extremely busy, **will be very challenging to connect with, keep trying**;
- 8. Then **present very briefly your purpose**, how will this benefit the community/organization;
- 9. Then you are on your way to **planning your first meeting** with the community/organization;
- 10. The next task would be to **confirm a date**;

Winning Tips!

- 11. Then **coordinate the details**: meeting room; catering; translation costs; honorariums; note taker; microphone and other audio; others;
- 12. You would be **responsible for these costs**;
- 13. **Begin your meeting with food**;
- 14. If this particular community/organization does follow traditional spirituality **then bring tobacco ties**;
- 15. **Bring gifts** with you especially if this is the first time that you are meeting with this community/organization;

More Planning

- 16. You could bring with you or send in advance a **list of topics (no agenda)**;
- 17. **Cultural activities** (i.e., hunts, memorials, feasts, ceremonies, etc.) **are a priority** and could therefore impact your schedules;
- 18. Many Indigenous **people teach through stories**: be patient;
- 19. **Look at 'everything' in a holistic manner** (spiritual, mental, physical and emotional);
- 20. **Humour is important!** Socialize first, crack a joke, have a tea, before you try to talk about serious matters;

Terminology

- 21. **Do not use the term 'Aboriginal'**. Find out the terminology that they prefer i.e. Indigenous or when in doubt use First Nation;
- 22. Important to **use terminology such as 'engagement' rather than using 'consultation'**;

Dealing with Emotions

- 23. **You could experience a variety of emotions** from Indigenous people such as displaced anger or confusion or other emotions which are direct impacts of Indian Residential Schools of survivors, children of survivors and grand children of survivors of the. You did not necessarily do anything wrong or offend the person;

Traditional Spirituality and Religion

- 24. Indigenous people **learn about their culture for the first time** when: they attend educational institutions, they attend rehabilitation centres, they are incarcerated or are in an urban centre for medical treatment;
- 25. **Push/pull and confusion around traditional spirituality and religion.** This is a need to know item: is the individual or community that you are meeting with a traditional person, Gospel, or faith-based i.e. United, Anglican, Catholic, Mennonite, Baptist, and so on;

Important

- 26. It is imperative that you **do your research** on the community or organization that you are looking to work with;
- 27. **Create an honest and genuine environment;** and,
- 28. If you require assistance with making contact with one of the First Nation communities, **feel free to contact Blue Sky** for assistance.

Comfort Level

- Do you have concerns about communicating with Indigenous clients? Do you feel uncomfortable for some reason? Are you afraid to offend them? Are you afraid of being yelled at?
- Let's talk about that 😊

Right Answer?

- There is no wrong way to do things if you are following your heart (and spirit) when you are approaching Indigenous communities or individuals.
- As you would with any culture or individual, treat them with respect and you will be respected.
- We have been talking mainly about the Indigenous people from our area but we are available for other dialogues. . . .

Blue Sky is grateful to for this opportunity to discuss the Indigenous Worldview



We welcome your questions ~
Chi-miigwech!
(Thank you very much!)

www.blueskycommunityhealingcentre.ca
