

# Dehcho Region

## Liidlii Kue First Nation Customs and Protocols

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May 22, 2019

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K'iyeli TRANSLATION, INTERPRETING & TRANSCRIBING SERVICE  
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# DEHCHO CUSTOMS and PROTOCOLS



## FOREWORD

This document outlines steps to give you some knowledge and skills on how to conduct successful, productive communication with Indigenous individuals, communities and family groups. This information will help build positive, long term relationships.

It has been prepared to improve direct communication between Indigenous people and others who work in Indigenous communities. This will help avoid unnecessary delays and conflict. Remember Indigenous communities have been subjected to “research” for many years and many people have become reluctant to cooperate and they don’t need much of an excuse to refuse to participate. This could have a serious impact on your project.

Indigenous people have legitimate concerns over the negative influence that visitors/workers can have on their families, community and culture. If you have respect and behave in a sensitive, culturally appropriate manner when visiting or working in communities - Indigenous people will support you and your project.

***Different communities, groups and individuals will require different approaches, depending upon circumstances as every community and every individual is different.***

## INDIGENOUS CUSTOMS

In this section, I’ll explain some common Indigenous customs, and offer tips on how to navigate them. Just as a foreign correspondent relies on a “fixer” to help translate local language and customs, your travels in Indigenous Country will run more smoothly if you have a trusted adviser who can explain why that old guy expects payment for the use of his ski-doo, or what to do when you’re invited to a feast. After all, the Lone Ranger

didn’t go far without his faithful Indigenous guide.

Here’s the bottom-line on Indigenous customs and protocols: if you’re ever unsure about your interpretation of an Indigenous custom, or whether it’s appropriate to participate in, write about, or record, an Indigenous ceremony, dance or song, ask your host. He or she will appreciate your care and concern.

***“Do FOR each other, what we want done FOR us”***  
***‘Keep the heart of the past but continue with tools of modern society’***

## INDIGENOUS WORLD VIEWS

### **Why is it important to recognize the differences between Indigenous and Western world views?**

Commemoration is based on what is valued. To recognize the values within Indigenous cultural landscapes and to commemorate these places, identification and evaluation must focus on Indigenous world views, rather than on the world views of the non-Indigenous cultures derived from the Western scientific tradition. The orientations of these two broad cultures differ radically. The Indigenous world view is rooted in identification with the land. Western experience is rooted in objectification and rationalism.

Indigenous peoples in Canada, like Indigenous peoples worldwide, approach history not primarily through the Western constructs of causal relationship, record, and time sequence, but through cosmology, narrative, and place. Recent examples of the integration of oral tradition and multi-disciplinary science reflect the sophisticated research approaches now applied to complex historical issues.

Widespread mapping projects in the Northwest Territories, Labrador, northern Quebec, northern Ontario, and Yukon have documented traditional harvesting areas through oral evidence and place identification. Individual hunters, trappers, fishers, and berry pickers actively participated in identifying lands that they have used and species that they have hunted in their lifetimes. The impressive degree of consistency among independently prepared maps and the striking extent to which maps from different communities fitted together have persuaded scholars of their reliability.

**Dene Oral Traditions** tell of the dispersal of their ancestors from their homeland long ago following a volcanic eruption. Subsequently they became separate linguistic groups. In one recent study, evidences developed from archaeology (such as dendro-chronology and radiocarbon dating techniques), environmental sciences (especially geology), and recent linguistic theory have related to traditional narratives of the Hare, Mountain, Chipewyan, Yellowknife and Slavey peoples to create a cohesive story out of the multiple clues. The analysis convincingly locates the volcanism both geographically, in the White River volcano, Alaska, and chronologically, in A.D.720. It thus supports the validity of both oral tradition and science.

**Traditional knowledge** points to the qualities for which Indigenous peoples value the land and is NOT TRANSFERRABLE. Scholarly analysis based on the methodologies of archaeology, history, ethnography, and related disciplines can contribute to the identification of values but does not play the lead role that it has played in cultural resource management practice.

**Participating in Ceremonies/Feasts;** As a new comer in Indigenous Country, it won't be long before you come across spiritual ceremonies. From feasts to drum dances, memorial feasts to drum dancing, different Indigenous Nations have different ceremonies – and they're an important contemporary connection to ancient cultural traditions. To Indigenous peoples, ceremony is about community; ceremony is a way to acknowledge the interconnectedness of everything; ceremony is how values and beliefs are taught and reinforced. Women are asked to use full length dresses, men moccasins.

**Some ceremonies are sacred and private;** But sometimes, at Indigenous gatherings, everyone present is asked to participate in a cultural ceremony, a prayer, a dance or a feast. For new comers who see themselves as objective observers of events, it can be unnerving to join a ceremony for the first time. If it makes you feel uncomfortable, ask your host to explain the process. If all else fails, follow the lead of the person in front of you. At Sacred Ceremonies everyone will follow proper dress codes. **Very important women with monthly do not participate in drum dances or Fire Ceremonies.**

**It's imperative to remain non-judgmental throughout the process;** The idea behind a smudge, for example, is to wipe away negative thoughts, tension and anxiety. If participating in the ceremony contradicts your own cultural or religious beliefs, just politely explain that. When you request permission to film or photograph a ceremony, be prepared for differing opinions.

**Indigenous Human Spiritually and protocols are based on oral custom;** there is no official handbook. Different people may give you different answers.

For example, smudging is a common ceremonial act you may encounter (using the smoke of sweetgrass, tobacco, juniper or sage to cleanse the mind, body, heart and spirit). While some Indigenous people don't object to a smudge being photographed or filmed, some will.

**Who do you ask;** In some Indigenous communities, you may be introduced to an elder's helper, or a person appointed to speak on behalf of a ceremonial leader. Or you may be directed to the person leading the ceremony. If not, you should try to locate that person — not everyone who is attending has the authority to grant you permission to film or photograph, no matter their stature in the community.

**If, after asking politely you're told "No;** This ceremony is off-limits to cameras," consider whether there's an alternative to explaining this moment with photos or video. For example, if you're a TV reporter, can you discuss a ceremony you're forbidden to film in a live-hit, the same way a radio reporter might? Try explaining to your hosts WHY the ceremony is important to your story, and how you intend to present it in your report (will it be sound only? if its video, will it be edited? if it's a photo, what sort of caption will run underneath?) Perhaps only a small part of the ceremony cannot be described or filmed — and you can use other parts.

**Once your subjects have a better understanding of why it is important to you to describe or film this ceremony, you may be able to find common ground.**

**If you agree;** not to film certain portions of a ceremony, camera operators should turn their cameras off, AND point it toward the ground, or in another direction, so participants are clear the camera isn't rolling.

**If you're writing;** about a ceremony, explain to your audience what's going on and why. In an abbreviated news story, it's tough to relay the complex stories and beliefs behind a ceremony, but help your audience appreciate that each ceremony has a purpose, that "chants" contain words and certain vibrations. Think about explaining the ceremony in a contemporary context — these days, "medicine-men" use cell-phones and "shamans" are as likely to call a gathering using Twitter as a "sacred drum."

**If you're asked NOT to record a ceremony;** it's unwise to ignore that request. If you really feel you must proceed and film surreptitiously, be aware that you may jeopardize your story, or future stories about that First Nation, by you or anyone else in your newsroom. You may also hurt relationships with other Indigenous Nations, who hear about your transgression, or recognize you've exposed something that shouldn't have been made public.

**Stealing Souls;** The Lakota leader Crazy Horse is one of the most famous Indigenous in history, but there are no pictures of him. As legend has it, he refused to be photographed, because he believed the camera would steal his soul.

The "Crazy Horse School of Photography" still has some subscribers, those who refuse to allow cameras because they believe a photograph literally captures an element of the life force of its subject. Certainly, many people — not just Indigenous people — find cameras intrusive.

**Historically;** Many Indigenous people didn't object to pictures, and eagerly posed for cameras. These days, cameras are ubiquitous — cell phones, digital cameras, and flipcams — and most Indigenous people are as fond of taking pictures as the next person. Lots of Indigenous people like to see themselves on TV or in the newspaper. At powwows or other public celebrations, if you ask politely, most Indigenous participants will usually cooperate — unless there are cultural or spiritual reasons for not doing so. A growing number of Indigenous cultural leaders recognize that a camera (and the person operating it) can be an important witness to cultural events. Capturing images of people and events “for the record” (and portraying them with dignity) is becoming an increasingly important tool for education, healing, and growth.

**Giving Gifts;** Media organizations often forbid reporters from paying a source for their participation in a story, theory being that payment may potentially taint the truth. But, in some Indigenous cultures, it is considered appropriate to offer a storyteller a gift, as a sign of respect. A gift is a way to acknowledge the willingness of the storyteller to share his or her time and knowledge, and to recognize that knowledge has value. Ask your Indigenous host whether a gift for an interview subject is appropriate, and if so, what type.

**Other Indigenous peoples may take offense;** if a visitor brings a gift, seeing it as a bribe — a version of Europeans landing on the shores of the New World, smiling and saying, “We come bearing gifts. “Should a reporter walk into a community bearing gifts, and if so, what kind? The easy answer: ask your Indigenous host whether a gift for an interview subject is appropriate, and if so, what type. The gift certainly need not be lavish. Amongst many Indigenous Nations, tobacco is a common gift for an elder, as its considered sacred medicine.

**Traditionally;** the gift would be tobacco leaves; today, it's acceptable to give a pouch of commercial rolling tobacco. A package of cigarettes will also do in a pinch, but generally, the tobacco is burned in ceremony (not smoked).

If you're uncomfortable presenting tobacco, any small token will do — a homemade jar of canned jams, a tin of coffee. If the person drives a car, offer to contribute gas money.

You may also want to offer an interview subject an honorarium, but be aware, if you work for a large media organization, this can get complicated (as you may need to provide the person's Social Insurance Number, mailing address, etc.).

**Receiving Gifts;** Sharing and generosity is an integral part of Indigenous culture. Visitors (journalists included) are often offered small gifts and keepsakes or invited to eat when visiting an Indigenous person's home. Try to accept such gifts – rarely would they be offered with the intention of bribing you.

**Ethics and Moral Policies;** in some newsrooms they put a dollar limit on gifts that can be accepted (\$25 is common), and most gifts you'll be offered will fall below that line. However, you may find it helpful to discuss these boundaries in your newsroom (one approach: return the favour, by sharing pens and baseball caps and buttons emblazoned with your news brand. If you're offered cash in a potlatch or a giveaway, accept it and use the money to buy gifts for people in the community.

What goes for gifts goes doubly for a host's offers of food and beverage. If someone pours you a cup of tea, take the time to drink it. Avoid rejecting reasonable offers of food, whether they seem delicious to you or not (moose nose, for example – don't knock it until you've tried it) – unless you have a health reason (it's lonely being a vegetarian in Indigenous Country).

**Death;** Death is often a journalist's bread-and-butter. Some First Nations cultures forbid showing pictures of the deceased for at least a year after the death.

It's uncomfortable work, no matter what culture or community you're in, and you've likely developed your own approach for broaching such a difficult subject with grieving friends and family.

**Dene historical funeral rites** begin, like all other solemn ceremonials, with smoking, and are concluded by a feast. The body is dressed in the best habiliments possessed by the deceased, or his relations, and is then deposited in a grave lined with branches; some domestic utensils are placed on it, and a kind of canopy erected over it. During this ceremony, great lamentations are made, and if the departed person is very much regretted, the near relations cut off their hair, pierce the fleshy part of their thighs and arms with arrows, knives, etc., and blacken their faces with charcoal. If they have distinguished themselves in war, they are sometimes laid on a kind of scaffolding; and I have been informed, that women, as in the East, have been known to sacrifice themselves to the manes of their husbands. The whole of the property belonging to the departed person is destroyed, and the relations take in exchange for the wearing apparel, any rags that will cover their nakedness. The feast bestowed on the occasion, which is, or at least used to be, repeated annually, is accompanied with eulogiums on the deceased, and without any acts of ferocity. On the tomb are carved or painted the symbols of his tribe, which are taken from the different animals of the country.

**Be aware;** that Indigenous cultures have their own customs for dealing with death. Some Indigenous Nations cultures forbid showing pictures of the deceased for at least a year after the death. Other cultures find it extremely disrespectful to show ANY images of a deceased person, or even mention their names.

**This custom, of “putting away”;** the name and image of the deceased, can be extremely problematic for a journalist whose objective is the opposite: to put a human face on a tragedy. What do you do, when an Indigenous community has cultural objections to you using images?

**The Indigenous Peoples Television Network;** news and current affairs division has an answer, in a section of its journalistic policy called “Cultural Considerations”: We will take care to respect and acknowledge ceremonial conduct and customs of a Nation. Certain ceremonies should not be named or shown for broadcast... In respect for certain Inuit culture, when a person dies every effort will be made not to say the name of the person or show their image in a news story or program for at least one year.

**Mainstream news;** reporters may balk at such restrictions, but our newsrooms regularly make editorial decisions based on cultural considerations. Many media outlets restrict reports about suicide, in part because the details are often unpleasant, but also for fear of triggering more suicides. Similarly, Canadian broadcasters hesitate to show graphic and brutal images of war, such as body parts, out of concern of upsetting audiences.

These are matters of journalistic policy and ethics, based upon assumptions about cultural mores of our audience. Indigenous traditions relating to death may not follow mainstream Canadian practice, but why can't they be respected?

In other parts of the world, government, broadcasters and filmmakers have all taken steps to sensitize reporters and producers on cultural protocols relating to coverage of deaths of Indigenous people.



**Amongst Indigenous Societies**, grieving traditions strictly prohibit the use of the name of a deceased person (customs vary from region to region, but amongst some groups, this may last for as long as 15 years). Ignoring protocols can cause immense grief and sorrow for the bereaved family.

In 2008, the Australian government encouraged the media to respect local grieving protocols when reporting Indigenous deaths, issuing the following advice: When a well-known individual passes away, the local community or media group may issue instructions on how the name, voice or images of this person can be used.

**If names or images are to be used;** written permission should be obtained from the person's family and/or community. When contacting the community, care should be taken to avoid using the person's name. The context in which the request is made should make it clear who is being referred to.

**If permission is granted;** it is usually restricted to the media outlet that applied for it — it does not mean that other media agencies can publish the name or image without seeking permission.

**Australia's public broadcaster, ABC**, went a step further, developing comprehensive guidelines instructing its journalists and documentary makers. The policy advises journalists that using images and voices of long-dead people – such as archival footage and photographs – may cause distress. Now, at the beginning of ABC programs, and on its website, this caution appears:

**WARNING: Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander viewers are warned that the following program may contain images and voices of deceased persons.**

Perhaps, these are complicated matters for Canadian media to wrestle with. Who owns archival images? How do you report a death without mentioning the name of the deceased? What if your competitor makes a different decision? But, tackling these issues, whether on a case-by-case basis or by developing a Code of Conduct, is key to showing respect and reciprocity to Indigenous cultural traditions.

**Eye Contact;** Eye contact is considered a basic component of social interaction in Canada. “Look me in the eye,” we tell our children. “Make eye contact,” we advise students learning to speak in public.

Typically, in social situations, Canadians make eye contact when first beginning to speak, then look away, then, periodically, return to the eyes of the person with whom we’re talking (the average duration of eye contact amongst North Americans is about three seconds). Someone who won’t make eye contact may be considered shy, rude, bored, or untrustworthy.

But staring directly into someone’s eyes is NOT the cultural norm amongst some Indigenous groups. If you find that an Indigenous person isn’t looking at you, it may be related to cultural teachings, gender roles, or the after-effects of imbalanced relationships with authority figures at residential schools.

**Be aware of your own biases;** when interpreting facial cues. Cross-cultural training manuals advise non-Indigenous judges, for example, to be cautious about interpreting an Indigenous defendant’s unwillingness to make eye contact as an admission of guilt. This can be especially challenging for a reporter during an interview. There’s no easy answer, whether to make eye contact or not, and for how long. Pay attention to your interviewee’s face and do your best to use facial behaviour that makes them feel comfortable.

**The Role of Elders;** Elders are treated with immense respect in Indigenous communities. Elders aren’t just old people. They are considered repositories of history and cultural teachings, and they’re often looked to for guidance and wisdom.

New comers should take great pains to avoid annoying elders. An elder’s blessing can make a new comer’s visit to a community run smoothly; an elder’s disapproval can signal the demise of a visit. Still, the realities of our business often conflict with expectations of how an elder should be treated, especially when it comes to interviewing protocol and clips.

**When speaking in public;** at gatherings in Indigenous communities, elders will often be given as much time as they need to speak. Similarly, when in private discussion with an elder, it’s considered rude to interrupt them. Don’t ask an elder for their opinion, if you’re on deadline, and don’t have time to listen to it respectfully. For instance 2 hours before your plane arrives as the elder may need more time than 2 hrs to ensure knowledge is comprehended.

**Interviewing elders;** can be a frustrating and puzzling experience. Traditional Indigenous storytelling is elliptical and sometimes, it's difficult to pry specific information out of an elder. "How do you feel about XYZ?" may result in a half-hour tale about a childhood experience.

If you're only looking for a 10-second clip, or a short quote, explain the conventions of your medium – at least that person is forewarned that you plan to reduce their teachings to a sound-byte.

**Don't ask an elder for their opinion;** if you're on deadline, and don't have time to listen to it respectfully.

Finally, Indigenous elders are busy folks. Far from relaxing in their golden years, a community's oldest and most respected elders are often in high demand, with a steady schedule of ceremonial functions to attend and requests to share traditional knowledge. "Consultation burnout" is not uncommon in Indigenous communities, particularly amongst elders. If you've requested the involvement of an elder in your story, be prepared to offer a gift that acknowledges that person's time and commitment to your project.

**"Indigenous Ethics and Rules of Behaviour";** When it comes to interacting and interviewing Indigenous people, should a journalist expect different behavior and responses than when dealing with non-Indigenous people? Yes, according to Dr. Clare Brant. Brant was a psychiatrist from the Mohawk community of Tyendinaga. He published a slim article in a journal of psychiatry two decades ago, entitled "Native Ethics and Rules of Behaviour," in which he advocated for a more culturally-appropriate approach to diagnosing and treating Indigenous mental health patients. The article remains widely quoted in psychiatry, anthropology and sociology circles, in Canada and internationally.

**Brant argued that certain ethics;** values and rules of behavior "persist in disguised form as carryovers from the Indigenous culture and which strongly influence Indigenous thinking and action even today." He based his observations on "years of interactions with Iroquois' in Ontario and Cree's in Northern Quebec and Ontario."

Brant didn't pretend behaviour he described applied universally to all Indigenous peoples. He recognized Indigenous people grow up with a variety of cultural influences, and there are likely variations amongst different tribes.

No question, there are dangers in generalizing about the psychology of any group of peoples.

For every Indigenous person (such as myself) who finds truths in Brant's analysis, there will be another who feels his or her community acts in an opposite manner. Still, I hope my summary of the ethics set out by Brant serves as a useful starting point for journalists attempting to interpret the behavior of the Indigenous people they meet and observe.

**The Ethic of Non-Interference;** The ethic of non-interference, says Brant, "is the principle that one Indigenous person will never tell another Indigenous person what to do." Brant believed non-interference is an ethic based in pre-contact tribal society, which relied upon voluntary cooperation for the achievement of group goals.

**These days, the ethic of non-interference;** boils down to this: It's considered rude behaviour to give instructions or orders, to an Indigenous person (or, for that matter, to pass any sort of judgment at all). Journalists may encounter such behaviour when an Indigenous person expresses reluctance to go on the record to criticize another member of the community. The journalist may consider it necessary to get such a clip to build tension or conflict in a story, but to keep pushing for that on-the-record critique may be an exercise in frustration.

**The ethic of non-interference;** may also come into play if a journalist is trying to advise or persuade an Indigenous person about what to do (for example, a cameraman telling a grandmother to walk up to the gravestone and put some flowers down, then repeat the action again). Indigenous people may consider such instructions or orders rude. Conversely, an Indigenous person may understand a journalist is doing something incorrectly (stepping haphazardly into a boat, for example, or interviewing the wrong person), but won't say anything, lest it be considered bad-mannered.

**Anger Must Not Be Shown;** Brant suggests the notion that anger must not be shown — that is, anger must be suppressed — has its roots in Indigenous beliefs about the role of shamans and witches, who one dare not offend or insult, for fear of having their powers directed at you. In Indigenous societies, Brant argued, "angry behavior is not merely unworthy and unwise, angry feelings are sinful. "These days, many Indigenous people have lots to be angry about, and Brant observed that suppressed anger gives rise to repressed hostility and explosiveness under the influence of alcohol.

Indigenous believe that once words turn into an argument the truth leaves and some one will be right, not truthful necessarily? Journalists may encounter repressed anger from an Indigenous person, when seeking a reaction to an emotional event.

**Simply put:** An Indigenous person who has experienced a tragic or sorrowful event may be reluctant to respond with anger or grief in public. If they do wind up expressing emotions, they may display an extreme response. While an outburst of tears or an extremely angry reaction may look great on TV, a journalist should be aware that an Indigenous person may be embarrassed afterwards. That journalist may find them self the object of hostility, if they're perceived as being the one who provoked the reaction.

**The Indigenous Concept of Sharing;** Brant considered the concept of sharing to be a universal ethic amongst Indigenous groups, with its origin in the need to show hospitality to other groups of hunters, even when there was not much food in the village. "To take more than one's fair share or more than what one actually needs to survive is considered greedy and wasteful," says Brant. This custom of sharing manifests itself in the principle of equality. "Every Indigenous person is just as good as everybody else," says Brant. Sharing and equality may be at play when a journalist, seeking to simplify a story by reducing it to key characters, gets push back from the people he's interviewing. "You should interview so-and-so, and so-and-so, and so-and-so..." An Indigenous person may be reluctant to be the main character or the focus of a news story, if it's perceived that such a portrait will elevate one person in a community over others.

**The Conservation/Withdrawal Reaction;** When white people are placed in an anxiety-provoking situation, Brant observed, they are taught to react with a great deal of activity: they talk your head off. But, according to Brant, Indigenous people have a completely different reaction: "an Indigenous person will become less talkative, the more anxious he gets. "He describes scenarios (such as a party or a psychiatric interview) where an Indigenous person who does not understand the rules or what behavior is expected of him will simply slow down, becoming nearly catatonic, as if going into hibernation. "The quieter the Indigenous person becomes, the more frantic the white person becomes trying to get some sort of response out of him. "For most people, an interaction with a journalist is uncommon, so it's not surprising that it may provoke anxiety.

If you're interviewing an Indigenous person, you may find your subject is nervous and clams up, rather than sharing information. If you want a productive interview, ensure the interviewee understands your expectations.

Find a bit of time before the interview to establish rapport. Answer any questions the interviewee may have, about the subject matter you intend to cover, and how you plan to present his or her answers in your story. Hopefully, that makes everyone more comfortable, and more open to dialogue.

### **Traditional Indigenous Values and Behaviors**

The following paragraphs draw contrast between selected and widely shared Indigenous core cultural values and non-Indigenous values and associated behaviors and attitudes. These brief descriptions are somewhat idealized. They cannot reflect the wide variations within Indigenous communities that result from different levels of cultural assimilation among individuals nor the differences among various Indigenous cultures across the North American continent; yet, these values are common enough that readers may have encountered them already.

**Personal differences;** Indigenous Nations traditionally have respected the unique individual differences among people. Common Indigenous expressions of this value include staying out of others' affairs and verbalizing personal thoughts or opinions only when asked. Returning this courtesy is expected by many Indigenous Nations as an expression of mutual respect.

**Quietness;** Quietness or silence is a value that serves many purposes in Indigenous life. Historically the cultivation of this value contributed to survival. In social situations, when they are angry or uncomfortable, many Indigenous persons remain silent. Non-Indigenous persons sometimes view this trait as indifference, when, it is a very deeply embedded form of Indigenous interpersonal etiquette.

**Patience;** In Indigenous life, the virtue of patience is based on the belief that all things unfold in time. Like silence, patience was a survival virtue in earlier times. In social situations, patience is needed to demonstrate respect for individuals, reach group consensus, and all time for "the second thought." Overt pressure on Indigenous students to make quick decisions or responses without deliberation should be avoided in most educational situations.

**Open work ethic;** In traditional Indigenous life, work is always directed to a distinct purpose and is done when it needs to be done. The nonmaterialistic orientation of many Indigenous is one outcome of this value. Only that which is needed is accumulated through work. In formal education, a rigid schedule of work for work's sake (busy work) needs to be avoided because it tends to move against the grain of this traditional value. Schoolwork must be shown to have an immediate and authentic purpose.

**Mutualism;** As a value, attitude, and behavior, mutualism permeates everything in the traditional Indigenous social fabric. Mutualism promotes a sense of belonging and solidarity with group members cooperating to gain group security and consensus. In Canadian and American education, the tendency has been to stress competition and work for personal gain over cooperation. The emphasis on grades and personal honors are examples. In dealing with Indigenous students, this tendency must be modified by incorporating cooperative activities on an equal footing with competitive activities in the learning environment.

**Nonverbal orientation;** Traditionally most Indigenous have tended to prefer listening rather than speaking. Talking for talking's sake is rarely practiced. Talk, just as work, must have a purpose. Small talk and light conversation are not especially valued except among very close acquaintances. In Indigenous thought, words have a primordial power so that when there is a reason for their expression, it is generally done carefully.

**In social interaction;** the emphasis is on affective rather than verbal communication. When planning and presenting lessons, it is best to avoid pressing a class discussion or asking a long series of rapid-fire questions. This general characteristic explains why many Indigenous students feel more comfortable with lectures or demonstrations. Teachers can effectively use the inquiry approach, role playing, or simulation to demonstrate they have a full understanding of this characteristic.

**Seeing and listening;** In earlier times, hearing, observing, and memorizing were important skills since practically all aspects of Indigenous culture were transferred orally or through example. Storytelling, oratory, and experiential and observational learning were all highly developed in Indigenous cultures.

**In an education setting;** the use of lectures and demonstrations, modified case studies, storytelling, and experiential activities can all be highly effective. A balance among teaching methods that emphasize listening and observation, as well as speaking, is an important consideration.

**Time orientation;** In the Indigenous world, things happen when they are ready to happen. Time is relatively flexible and generally not structured into compartments as it is in modern society. Because structuring time and measuring it into precise units are hallmarks of public schools in Canada and the United States, disharmony can arise between the tradition-oriented Indigenous learner and the material being presented. The solution is to allow for scheduling flexibility within practical limits.

## **CONSULTATION PROTOCOL WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**Step 1 – Making Contact;** Contact with the First Nations Communities: The First Nations office must be notified and involved when major development is being proposed that will affect communities and Indigenous people's well-being. The Chief of the First Nation and community Chiefs must be contacted first. The Chief's will then inform the community officials and others. The Chief will then contact all other Chiefs in all other communities at an annual assembly. They noted here that if Executive members are individually contacted without the knowledge of the Chief or Grand Chief, then they are in no position to honour an invitation or request.

Contact at the community level: If the development is focused on a community then the local First Nation or Community office is the access point to the communities. It is the First Nation that convenes the communities for a community meeting. Grand Chief, Chiefs and community officials keep each other informed. Community officials cannot call First Nations meetings. When community officials need a community meeting, they should notify the Chief who calls the membership meeting.

**Step 2 - Information Sharing;** All correspondence to the First Nations and to individual community governments must be in writing. The delivery of messages and information during consultation events must include an interpreter skilled in the local language (Dene Zhatie).

The purpose of the meeting/workshop or event must be clearly stated in the letter to the Grand Chief, Chiefs and Community officials of the communities of interest.

Supplemental materials should be included along with the correspondence. Indigenous Persons have the right to choose their own technical support and relevant information must be promptly shared so that leaders have the proper time to understand all relevant information.



**Step 3 – Timing of Notice;** Any notice of meetings and other events must be given at least 7 calendar days in advance. Longer notice periods are preferable, especially for major developments or initiatives. This is to allow the communities governments time to plan, manage their attendance and seek technical assistance where necessary.

**Step 4 – Venue of Meetings;** The meeting or consultation event must be held at the community center or in a public place where attendance by community members is not inhibited by the location of the venue.

**Step 5 – Decision-making Processes;** Decisions on behalf of the community in indigenous communities are done collectively at community Meetings called by the Leadership. The community Meeting is the fundamental decision-making authority that is usually by consensus or majority decision. When the Chief receives information or request he passes it on to the community members and they in turn tell the Chief what to do. The collective decision of the community is transmitted back to the external agency by the affected First Nations office. Decisions of the communities must be recorded in writing.

**In the Dehcho Region;** The Annual General Assembly is the fundamental authority for decision making. The executive body carries the decision of the assembly. The individual delegates register their vote on an issue based on the directive of the community meeting on a specific issue. There may be a need to bring other members in an assembly. The Grand Chief and Chiefs are the recognized and respected leaders in the communities and hold Treaty 11 entitlements, so they will decide whom can be invited to participate.

**Always provide an interpreter if you are unable to speak in the local language. An ideal interpreter would be a person who understands the elder's rich terminology as it is not equal to the younger person for clear understanding. Get someone who knows people and who is credible and trusted by the community.**

## HONORARIUMS FIRST NATIONS ELDERS

**Purpose;** The purpose of this information is to establish a standard for honoraria to be paid by the business organizations to First Nations Elders who are invited to speak to classes, participate on planning committees and assist the First Nations Centre's in our communities.

**Scope;** This information and its procedures applies to visiting Indigenous Elders and to organizations including businesses who will be utilizing the experiences of these Elders and will be providing an honorarium for this service to the client.

**Authority;** All Indigenous Nations organizations, community governments and businesses will be responsible for ensuring this information and its procedures are followed for services provided to the clients by Indigenous Elders.

**Standard Honorarium for Community Requests;** The following standard honorarium will be used on all K'iyeli Services projects for services provided to the business organizations by Indigenous Elders. Special event/ceremony (that might not be longer than 1 hour of their time at the event, but would require them to do pre-event preparation or post-event debrief)

**Free** means no pressure, intimidation or influence on the community decision-making process, from project planners, government or any other source. Prior means the government or company should have community permission (Consent) far ahead of beginning any project activities, and the community have the time to talk and understand the project before agreement is reached; and this must be respected by all parties.

**Informed** means that all information relating to the activity is provided to communities in advance and that the information is objective, accurate and presented in clear way that the community understand. Important information includes:

- 1. the nature, size, duration, and scope of any proposed project;*
- 2. the reason(s) or purpose of the project;*
- 3. the location of areas that will be affected;*
- 4. the possible economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts on the community and their lands and resources, including potential risks and realistic benefits;*
- 5. personnel likely to be involved in the implementation of the project, and;*
- 6. the rights that the community has and the procedures that the project may entail.*

Communities have a right to benefit from independent advice from a lawyer and other experts and NGOs.

**Consent** means that projects can only go ahead if communities have agreed to an activity or project that concerns them. Communities also have the right to refuse them consent or to give consent but only on conditions that meet their needs, priorities and concerns. Consultation and participation are very important in consent-seeking processes.

**Consultation** must be undertaken in good faith, which, among other things, requires that community views are considered in the process or fair reasons are provided as to why such consideration is not possible. All parties must establish a dialogue allowing them to identify good and workable solutions in an environment of mutual respect and full and equal participation, with enough time to reach decisions. The whole community (men, women, youth and elderly,) must be able to participate in discussions and decisions, including through their own freely chosen representatives and customary or other institutions.

THE END