



How to talk about Traditional Tobacco?



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Traditional Tobacco



How it's used



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What we envision



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Traditional Tobacco

Traditional Tobacco is a gift from the Creator. It is held with the utmost importance for many American Indians. Every tribe that uses tobacco traditionally has their own name and translation for tobacco.

How it's used

Every tribe/person who uses tobacco traditionally has their own protocols and specific teachings. Here are some examples of the way it can be used for cultural and ceremonial purposes.

- Offerings to the water
- To an elder to offer a prayer, teachings
- For animals giving their life for sustenance
- Ceremonies
- Pow-wows
- To the drums

- Spirit Plates
- Honoring of someone

Tobacco is a medicine of connection, reminding each of us to consider our place in the present moment and how we can support one another as we move into the future. When tobacco is exchanged, it is with a promise to honor what was asked.

What we've achieved

Traditional Tobacco is part of our daily lives. It is embedded in many creation stories and teachings for American Indian ways of life. Traditional tobacco is, for many, a foundational medicine,

Our Impact in Numbers

800

People Served

Circle of Cultures Initiative: Launched this year, this initiative worked closely with five Tribal Communities to promote the cultivation of traditional tobacco and medicines, strengthening cultural practices and preserving indigenous knowledge.

National Tribal Tobacco Conference: This event brought together individuals from across the nation, showcasing the impactful work being done in Indian Country to preserve and revitalize traditional tobacco practices.

Healing Together Conference: With over 400 participants, this conference focused on fostering collaboration and healing, using cultural medicines as the cornerstone of the work. It was a meaningful gathering that united people from across the country in shared purpose.

150

and counting

Traditional Tobacco
Plants grown

The American Indian Religious Freedom Act passed in 1978. Community members have been actively reclaiming and restoring their traditional medicines including tobacco.

This Federal protection allowed ceremonial tobacco use to come back into the open with our pipes, helping build and strengthen our relationships to one another *and* with tobacco.



Tribal Communities know the needs of their people.

Our project has centered on providing resources to Tribal communities to invest their communal care into building and sustaining their community's traditional tobacco networks.

Existing tobacco 'control' funding have limitations and restrictions, which ultimately become policy barriers for our communities to grow their healthy relationship with tobacco.



Melissa Buffalo, CEO

American Indian Cancer
Foundation

"When I reflect on my family's relationship with tobacco, I am grateful for the connection it provides to our past and the path it shapes for the future. Tobacco has always been present—not just as a sacred medicine for our people, but as a relationship we honor and uphold."



Our Love Letter to Tobacco.

(A compilation of teachings from participants)

You never take, without giving something

*Taino called it Tobacu, Mohawk call it ONWE,
Cansasa, Pistaxkaan*

*Greet the forest, berries, water, foods and
winds*

What do your people call tobacco?

Creator's time is right on time

All generations all the time

*All solutions are spiritual solutions. All people
live by their dreams.*

We are the ancestor's dreams.

*Re-seeding, Re-storying imagination -
cosmological relationships*

*I heard a Mohawk woman say, "I apprenticed
myself with those seeds. We have a cultural
memory. We are the lineal descendants of
our traditional seeds.*

What is our purpose?

What is our intent?

What is and will be our story?

It is written in our blood and our bones.

*Remembering and Rehydrating our Ancestral
Brilliance.*

Shining stars shine on, shine on.



Finding our way, our home, our sense of belonging renewing connection agreements.

And then I heard, "Our ceremonial cycles are our food cycles."

Tobacco Seeds – Put into the dark soil. The root of our power is the connection to the land. These seeds will outlive us.

We cannot be defined by intergenerational trauma.

Tobacco seeds live on Creator's time.

Not everyone is destined to grow tobacco and that's okay.

Seeds come in their own time. It is a gift we receive.

One seed. One plant.

Invite all generations.

Many ways: One Mind to Keep Tobacco

What We Envision

We envision a world where traditional tobacco is honored and celebrated as a gift from the Creator, a sacred medicine. When working with your communities, please take the time to learn the stories, protocols and teachings of what tobacco and plant medicines mean to them.

To learn more about the ancestral homelands you reside on, you can visit:

🌐 Native-Land.ca | Our home on native land



Contact Us

For further information, please reach out to us at traditionaltobacco@aicaf.org.

American Indian Cancer Foundation

Address: 34 13th Ave.NE, Suite 112, Minneapolis, MN 55413

Website: www.americanindiancancer.org / www.traditionaltobacco.org

This project is dedicated in memory of



Wakanhdi Ptecana, Chris Johnson