

Ceremonial Protocols

First Nations and Métis peoples follow various traditional and cultural teachings. The Elders affirm that the Creator gave different forms of culture and expression to different peoples, and that these forms are all equally valid. Furthermore, they recognize individuals and groups are enriched through the sharing of their cultural knowledge. Some teachings may be different from nation to nation, but we acknowledge and respect those differences.

Pipe Ceremony

Pipe ceremonies differ from tribe to tribe even from one person to the next within their own tribe. Pipes and ceremony are given as gifts to certain people.

Upon coming into the pipe ceremony, the men will come to the left side of the tipi and women to the right side.

Prior to the start of the ceremony, the Elders Helper will go around and offer you to smudge yourself; this symbolizes the purification of your mind, body, and spirit.

The Elder will share a few words of welcome and will then use his or her language to offer prayer.

At FNUUniv, generally, all the men will join a male pipe carrier in the inner circle where the pipe will be smoked and passed around in a clockwise direction and all the women will join the woman pipe carrier in her own circle where the pipe will be smoked and passed around in a clockwise direction. Two-spirit people can choose which part of the circle they want to join. The tobacco that is used is free from today's chemicals and toxins and is a mixture of natural tobacco and plants.

If there is only a men's pipe in the ceremony, the women and children will sit in the outer circle and will also help the Elder with his prayers. The old people say that when we pray as a collective, our prayers are much stronger.

The Woman's Presence

The woman, it is said, own half of every lodge and is respected for her ability to bring life into this world; it is important that we show honor and respect to her at all times.

To show respect to the ceremony, a woman will wear a long skirt or dress that goes past the knees or cover with a blanket and will not sit with her legs crossed during the pipe ceremony.

The Old people say that women are very strong because of their ability to undergo a natural purification (menstrual cycle) and that they should refrain from participating in ceremony or touching sacred objects during their menstrual cycles because of the power they hold.

If you have any questions, please talk with a Kokum or a woman who is knowledgeable in the traditional ways of the woman's role. You may also speak with the Elders Helper, and he can direct you to what you need to know / or to whom to speak with before the ceremony.

Full Moon Ceremony

Full moon ceremonies are owned by women and two-spirit peoples in their half of the lodge. Unless you have been told otherwise, only women and two-spirit people should partake in a full-moon ceremony.

No special attire is required. Those in attendance can wear skirts or pants.

Everyone is encouraged to bring a drum and/or rattle to the ceremony to join in song. The Elder usually invites anyone who wishes to share a song to sing during the ceremony.