

Land is Body, Body is Land Acknowledgment

Recommended Age: 12+

Goal

- To introduce youth to an Indigenous worldview of connection to Land, including sexuality.

Instructions

- Sitting in a circle, have youth get comfortable and read the following Anishinaabe Land Acknowledgement.

Note to Facilitators

- This Anishinaabe worldview of Body is Land Acknowledgment is contributed by Vanessa AnakwudwabisayQuay from Peguis First Nation. It is one understanding of many teachings from diverse populations of Indigenous Nations. It is to explore and give meaning to the commonly talked about Indigenous concepts such as “Land is Sacred,” “We belong to the Land,” “We are spiritually connected,” and “Water is Life.”
- For a non-Indigenous person, it is essential to remain culturally humble (i.e., respectful and reflective) when sharing knowledge from a culture that is not our own. This means sharing where the knowledge comes from, acknowledging the limitations of our knowledge of that worldview, continuously listening and learning, apologizing when misunderstanding, and prioritizing Indigenous presence and voices.

Visualization Disclaimer

“I’m going to ask you to go into your body, to think a little deeply about it for a few minutes, so if you don’t want to for any reason, please don’t.”

Visualization

- **“I want you to picture some Land you know. Could be anywhere, could be your backyard, a place you travelled to, your home, or even a piece of cement or sidewalk. Picture some Land you think is beautiful. Now go inside your body; your body is the same as the Land, ever connected.”**
- **“Water - Picture water on the Land. Can you locate the rivers, lakes, waterfalls in your body? Floods, currents, and gushing happen where in your body?”**
- **“Think of your veins, your genitals, your kidneys and bladder; anyone take a pee today? Think of your stream of tears flowing down. Are they sad or happy streams?”**
- **“Earth - Think of the stones and rocks on the Land, the grasses and the mosses growing and blowing in the wind and rains. Where in your body are these?”**
- **“Think of your bones, your toes, and the places your hair grows. What’s in between your toes and where are your swamplands? What’s in your bellybutton right now?”**
- **“To the Winds - See it blow the trees and rain across the Land. Where is the wind in your body? Take a deep breath in and let it out slowly making wind. Think of other places your body uses wind. Think of weather systems now. Where can a tornado happen in your body? Have you ever farted so loud you woke yourself up? LOL. Laughter! What is laughter but cleansing wind releasing through our body. Sometimes as loud as thunderstorms on the earth, we laugh. There is thunder in our body.”**
- **“Now locate the Fire in your body. Where does your heat and warmth come from? Picture a volcano. Ever had heartburn? Like the core of the Earth, our body warms us. There is fire**

and lightning in the body. Your synapses are firing away right now, telling each cell what to do.”

- **“Think back to the Land, the Earth, see the mountains, rolling hills, plains, caves, and crevices. Where in your body are your hills, your flat places, your caves, and crevices? When has your body felt tectonic plates move? Ever felt your body quake and tremble like the Earth?”**
- **“Now go back to that Land you started with; it doesn’t matter where you start, your body as that Sacred place which is the same as the Land, or the beautiful Land is Sacred so you know that your body is Sacred too. The Land and us, we are one and the same. What happens to the Earth happens to our body.”**
- **“Now think of your body as your territory. Know it in your stones and your bones. It’s my body, it’s my territory. My body, my territory. If you were to make Treaty with someone, to invite them into or onto your territory, how Sacred is that Treaty? It’s your body, your territory.”**
- **Miigwetch**

Debrief

- **“How was that? Does it make sense? Was there anything that stands out to you?”**
- **“What is ‘your body, your territory’ really talking about?”**
Consent.
- **“How was sexuality a part of the visualization?”** Bodies and the Earth have sexuality in their forms and their functions. Also, how we feel when we think about those forms and functions is part of our sexuality. Sexuality is a natural part of all living things. **How it comes out of each of us is unique and special based on who we are and the choices we make. Sexuality is as diverse as the Lands on the Earth.**
- When we know and accept that we are part of the Land and that it is part of us, it can connect us to deeper understandings. It can

also give us a sense of connection and belonging to something more powerful than ourselves. It can help us develop and maintain responsibility for taking care of ourselves, the environment, and each other.

Note to Facilitators: For more in-depth discussions

- **“How was sexual pleasure represented in the visualization?”**
Words like floods and gushing. Speaking of tectonic plates shifting, earthquakes, and trembling refers to arousal and orgasms. The beauty of the Land and body in their various forms can be a source of sexual pleasure. **Sexual pleasure is naturally occurring and meant to be healthy.**
- With Indigenous perspectives as the foundation of discussions, the importance of honouring Treaties in Canada can be made as we link it to consent. Coercion and the original intention of Treaties should be central to the discussion.ⁱ
- Connection to Land protection and violence against Indigenous people can be explored.ⁱⁱ

ⁱPratt, D., & Bone, H. (2014). *Untuwe pi kin he who we are: Treaty elders' teaching volume 1* (Vol. 1, p. 160). Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Secretariat.

ⁱⁱIndigenous Climate Action. (2018, March 19). *Violence Against the Land is Violence Against Women*. Indigenous Climate Action. <https://www.indigenousclimateaction.com/entries/violence-against-the-land-is-violence-against-women>; Honor the Earth. (n.d.). Chasing out the spectre of man camps... In *Honor the Earth* (pp. 1–2). https://www.honorearth.org/man_camps_fact_sheet; Laboucan-Massimo, M. (2018, March 8). Climate justice must include gender justice. *David Suzuki Foundation One Nature*. https://davidsuzuki.org/story/climate-justice-must-include-gender-justice/?utm_campaign=stories-womensDay-en-08mar2018&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=page-link