



Under One Sky Friendship Centre

The Four Sacred Medicines

Background

The four sacred medicines (Tobacco, Sage, Sweetgrass and Cedar) are used for every day life as well as ceremonies. All four of these sacred medicines can be used to smudge with while sage, sweetgrass and cedar have many other uses as well.

The burning of the four sacred medicines is often referred to as smudging. Sage, sweetgrass and cedar are often burned to purify one's self, one's space and one's spiritual or healing tools. The burning of herbs is used during healing work and prayer as they help connect to one's higher power with the smoke carrying one's intentions and prayers to the Ancestors and Creator in the Spirit world. During healing work, the smoke may be directed by blowing or fanning with the hand or feathers over the one receiving healing.

The medicines individually can be used for smudging and ceremony or be put together in medicine bundles. These bundles can be put in medicine bags. The medicine bag is a sacred item and often worn around the neck, close to the heart. It can also be worn on a belt, put in a pocket, carried in a briefcase or purse, under clothing, in your car, or even placed under your pillow at night. By keeping it close, you are connecting with your spiritual self and helping yourself in healing.

Remember the best teachers are the Elders. Elders are respected individuals who play key roles in Indigenous communities. They are important knowledge keepers, and are living connections to the past. Elders serve as teachers, healers, advisors and counsellors.

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