




**The Indigenous Circle of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association**

***Ways of Leading ~ Ways of Seeing ~ Ways of Being***

Boozhoo; Aaniin; Kwey Kwey; Oki; Wel’liog; Yowitz; Danach’e’a; Kwai Kwai; Klahowya; Sge:noh; Wha Chii Ya; Kii-te-daas a; Gilakas'la; Gitiana Mikagom; Yeytk; Sheko:li; Pjil'as; Tân'si; Shé:kon; Wa.é ák.wé; Siigaay laas; Haluukafi; Hadih; Tunngasugit; Sge:noh; Kii-te-daas a; Aganna; Wa'tkwanowera:ton; Tu ough qua no u; See-a; Etlanete'; Ainngai; Yaw; Etlanete'; Atelihai; Danach'e'a; Asujutidli; Se'kon; Wotziye; Atelihai; Halu; Tawnshi; Taanishi; Way'; Bonjour; Greetings

Please let us know if your Indigenous language greeting is not included here, and we will add it with gratitude 

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The [Indigenous Circle Chapter](#) welcomes all members of the [Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association \(CCPA\)](#) who are practitioners (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who work with and support Indigenous Peoples and/or who have an interest and commitment to understanding issues and supporting initiatives with/for Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Peoples refers to First Nations (status and non-status), Métis, and Inuit Peoples of the land now known as Canada.

**Our Shared History**

Chi miigwech (a large and sacred gratitude) to **Andrea Currie** and **Margie Cain** of our *Elders and Knowledge Keepers Council* as they put their hearts, minds, and spirit towards sharing the stories of our history as an *Indigenous Circle Chapter*. We, as a circle, are so grateful for their continued care and support, including their guidance in the process of creating the current document to consider *ways of leading*. We will add these stories into our document as they are developed, in their own good time.

**Our Journey: Reflections from a Cultural Lens**

Since 2021, the Indigenous Circle Chapter (ICC) has actively committed to shifting the existing “constitution and bylaws document” from a hierarchical colonial model towards a shared leadership process informed by Indigenous wholistic theories, teachings, ethics, philosophies, and aspects of traditional leadership practices. The current document reflects our shared understanding, teachings, and practices from a cultural perspective to center work within the integrity, spirit, and strength of a circle process. These aspirations have naturally led to a shift towards the *ICC Leadership Circle*.

The *ICC Leadership Circle* understands the importance of embodying cultural values and ethics regarding patience, reciprocal process, respectful relationships, humility, and ongoing consultation with *Elders* and *Knowledge Keepers* who support us. The circle honours the gifts contained within the *seven sacred values* or [Grandfather Teachings](#) (love, respect, courage, truth, wisdom, humility, and honesty), which inform our *ways of being* and our decision-making processes. The circle seeks to share an understanding of wholistic principles of healing, helping, and wellness that respects Indigenous diversity and unique cultural *land-and-place-based expressions* in centering spirit, heart, body, and mind. The circle honours an understanding of ceremony, protocol, cultural humility, and mentorship practices that include awareness of historical contexts as vital to understanding current cultural contexts. The circle honours the concept and teachings of [Wise Practices](#) (Wesley-Esquimaux & Snowball, 2010) as deeply rooted in Indigenous philosophies and worldview and now contained as an ethical decision-making framework in the [CCPA Code of Ethics](#) (2020, p. 5). The circle honours the wisdom of [Elder Albert Marshall](#) and [Elder Murdena Marshall](#), and their teachings of the concept of [Etauptmumk / Two-eyed Seeing](#), which seeks to incorporate the strengths of Western knowledge with one eye, and the strengths of Indigenous knowledges with the other eye, towards an integrated depth perspective for the benefit of all (Marshall, 2004). The circle understands the importance of honouring *all ways of knowing*. We consider our '*Ways of Leading*' as a living document with its own spirit and always open to teachings, thoughts, feedback, and considerations from the *Indigenous Circle Chapter* as the ongoing process of creating the document continues to emerge.

As essential to the smooth ongoing flow of a circle, we honour a ***cultural relationship-based paradigm*** in leadership practices. These ways of leadership provide for the continuity of a circle that is well grounded in context, history, cultural teachings, good intentions, and respectful relationships.

### Statement of Good Intentions

The *ICC Leadership Circle* seeks to tend to the spirit of the larger ICC membership and consider the needs of individual practitioners (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who work with, and support Indigenous Peoples of the land now known as Canada. The [CCPA Standards of Practice](#) (2021) contain fourteen specific articles related to *Indigenous Peoples, Communities, and Contexts* (Section I, p. 90-100). These articles outline ethical imperatives specific to:

***Love, compassion, and a listening ear  
are our most powerful medicines.***  
Elder Albert Marshall (2021)  
Shared during a teaching circle with the  
*Indigenous Circle Chapter*

- ❖ the awareness of historical and contemporary contexts, along with reflection on self and personal cultural identities ***before*** engaging with Indigenous communities or individuals
- ❖ recognition of Indigenous diversity
- ❖ respectful awareness of traditional practices
- ❖ respectful participation in traditional practices as is appropriate

- ❖ a focus on strengths-based community perspectives
- ❖ awareness of relevant cross-cultural practices
- ❖ a nuanced cultural understanding of relationships
- ❖ reciprocity, and relational practices
- ❖ appropriate use of traditional knowledge and cultural teachings
- ❖ the honouring of client autonomy, worldview, and self-identification

The *ICC Leadership Circle* works to create and support initiatives that can include advancing culturally congruent counselling, advocating for meaningful depth of understanding of practice standards and culturally-informed ethics as per *Section I: Indigenous Peoples, Communities, and Contexts*, identifying culturally-relevant resources, and sharing/creating/supporting personal and professional development opportunities for CCPA members (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) who work together with/for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

## 1.0 Our Path

- 1.1 To provide opportunities for members of the ICC to meet, discuss, and share ideas, knowledges, and resources to support each other to facilitate the ongoing exchange of information among Indigenous practitioners and/or those who work with Indigenous Peoples.
- 1.2 To provide opportunities by which practitioners can become aware of safe, effective, and culturally appropriate ways (including counselling and psychotherapy skills) of working with/alongside Indigenous Peoples.
- 1.3 To highlight Indigenous knowledges in the context of culturally congruent practices through culturally informed trainings, teaching/discussion/sharing circles, and working to increase cultural awareness of a *Wise Practices* lens when counselling or working with Indigenous Peoples.
- 1.4 To continue working towards a shared leadership process within the *ICC Leadership Circle*, thereby leading by example to support those committed to a decolonizing lens in thinking and approach.
- 1.5 To work with the national association (CCPA) as time, energies, and priorities allow, to provide input and the perspective of an Indigenous lens on specific issues and concerns.



## 2.0 Our Relatives

- 2.1 Membership is open and welcome to all Indigenous and non-Indigenous relatives in good standing (including student members) with the CCPA.

- 2.2 ICC members are asked to pay an annual membership fee as determined by the *ICC Leadership Circle* (currently \$10.00). The *ICC Leadership Circle* reserves the right to waive the membership fee when it becomes clear through communication with a current or prospective member that they are experiencing financial hardship.

### **3.0 Our Guidance: The Elders and Knowledge Keepers Council**

- 3.1 The *Elders and Knowledge Keepers Council* of the *Indigenous Circle Chapter* is made up of past members of the *ICC Leadership Circle* who choose to continue to participate in a supportive way, encircling the *Leadership Circle* and being available when needed, as they are able. This aligns with our Indigenous tradition of valuing our *Elders and Knowledge Keepers* and turning to them when we need guidance and support. Members who are moving out of active involvement in the *ICC Leadership Circle* are invited to join the *Elders and Knowledge Keepers Council*, if they wish, with no minimum or maximum number for this Council, and no set term.

### **4.0 Our Shared Relational Ethics**

- 4.1 A wholistic understanding of *Wise Practices* (an understanding of helping work as honoured through the cultural lens of the *seven sacred values* of love, respect, courage, truth, wisdom, humility, and honesty) and the traditions, relational values, and ethics of Indigenous Peoples (such as caring, sharing, giving, respectful relationships, transparency, humility, and reciprocity) shall center the energy, intentions, and spirit of the *ICC Leadership Circle*.
- 4.2 The *CCPA Standards of Practice (2021)* contains fourteen specific articles related to *Indigenous Peoples, Communities, and Contexts (Section I, p. 90-100)*. These articles outline the ethical imperatives specific to the awareness of historical and contemporary contexts along with reflection on self and personal cultural identities *before* engaging with Indigenous communities or individuals; recognition of Indigenous diversity; respectful awareness of traditional practices; respectful participation in traditional practices as is appropriate; a focus on strengths-based community perspectives; awareness of relevant cross-cultural practices; a nuanced cultural understanding of relationships, reciprocity, and relational practices; appropriate use of traditional knowledge and cultural teachings; and the honouring of client autonomy, worldview, and self-identification.

### **5.0 Our Annual Gathering Meeting (AGM)**

- 5.1 There shall be an Annual Gathering Meeting [herein termed “AGM”] inviting all members of the ICC to share thoughts, ideas, directions, and highlights moving forward for the ICC.
- 5.2 The *ICC Leadership Circle* will seek to invite an Indigenous Elder to provide guidance at the AGM. This invitation will be honoured in culturally appropriate ways.
- 5.3 Notice of the AGM's place, date, hour, and agenda shall be communicated to all ICC members at least 15 days in advance, with the date determined by the *ICC Leadership Circle*.
- 5.4 A summary of the AGM will be posted on the ICC Chapter's website following the meeting.

## 6.0 Our Shared Voice in Discussions and Decisions

- 6.1 Each member at the AGM shall be encouraged to have their voice in discussions and shared directions.
- 6.2 Each member of the ICC shall be invited to have their voice in all discussions, directions, and decisions at all monthly ICC Leadership meetings, with encouragement to share any thoughts, worries, or concerns, which is important to the concept of community and consensus building and represents a valued contribution to the circle; additionally and alternatively, thoughts or concerns can be shared with the ICC Leadership by sending a communication through our ICC email (or requesting to meet) at [icc@ccpa-accp.ca](mailto:icc@ccpa-accp.ca).

## 7.0 The ICC Leadership Circle

- 7.1 The *ICC Leadership Circle* shall consist of ICC members who would like to be part of shared leadership discussions and decision-making in an ongoing way, for a term of one year.
- 7.2 It is understood that *ICC Leadership Circle* members shall lead without remuneration with regard to the monthly leadership circles or any meeting pertaining to decision-making for the circle however, invitations to provide cultural activities or workshops, knowledge sharing, teachings, professional development circles, and ceremonies provided through the ICC (whether by invitation to a Leadership Circle member, a member of the larger ICC, or by invitation extended outside of the circle), will observe an established protocol for honoraria (with gratitude) as is culturally informed, appropriate, and as decided by the *ICC Leadership Circle*.
- 7.3 It is hoped that the *ICC Leadership Circle* will include as much involvement and representation as possible from our members of Indigenous ancestry to provide culturally informed perspectives within diverse lived experiences, along with settler ally relatives committed to supporting and highlighting these perspectives.
- 7.4 The *ICC Leadership Circle* will be responsible to the ICC membership for managing and conducting ICC affairs.

## 8.0 Shared Tasks of the ICC Leadership Circle

- 8.1 The *ICC Leadership Circle* understands responsibilities such as financial record keeping, liaising with the CCPA, and completing specific reports as required by the CCPA, are part of the requirements of CCPA Chapters. As a shared leadership circle, these responsibilities will be considered through the unique gifts of each member, each being invited to find expression as part of a natural responsibility to take one's place in the circle.

### 8.2 These general tasks include:

- 8.2.1 Preparing for and guiding meetings of the *ICC Leadership Circle*.
- 8.2.2 Respond to specific inquiries about the ICC or general inquiries regarding CCPA.

8.2.3 Preparing and submitting an Annual Report each year before the spring meeting and an Interim Report before the fall meeting of the CCPA national board.

8.2.4 Attend CCPA Chapter Presidents' meetings of the CCPA whenever possible (monthly).

### **8.3 Facilitate "Summaries of Focus" and necessary documents to:**

8.3.1 Summarize the discussion themes of meetings and share with members of the *ICC Leadership Circle* before the next meeting. This summary can be oral/verbal in recognizing the cultural strengths and predispositions toward narrative, story, and teachings while creating space for sensitivity and contextual aspects.

8.3.2 Maintain the necessary documents via the ICC section of the website (for example: *Ways of Leading ~ Ways of Seeing ~ Ways of Being* document and AGM summary of focus and decisions).

### **8.4 Attend to treasurer duties:**

8.4.1 Oversee the ICC's financial affairs by keeping accurate accounts of money received and dispensed by the ICC.

8.4.2 Prepare financial reports as necessary.

## **9.0 The ICC Leadership Circle Meetings**

9.1 The *ICC Leadership Circle* shall meet a minimum of once a year.

9.2 Members of the ICC are invited and welcome to attend *ICC Leadership Circle* meetings and be part of the discussion, and an invitation with zoom link will be sent to the entire ICC membership before each circle.

9.3 Invited guests, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, those seeking to consult, or those being asked to consult from a cultural lens may be included, whether they are a CCPA member or not, at the discretion/invitation of the *ICC Leadership Circle*.

## **10.0 Smaller-Focused Circles**

10.1 The *ICC Leadership Circle* may establish smaller-focused circles to consider specific questions or tasks, with decisions/considerations to be shared with the *ICC Leadership Circle*.

## **11.0 Matters of Finance**

11.1 The CCPA National Office levies membership fees on behalf of the ICC, and a cheque is sent to the ICC treasurer every six months.

11.2 The *ICC Leadership Circle* shall ensure the sound financial management of the ICC.

**12.0 Agreements**

12.1 Members of the *ICC Leadership Circle* may enter into agreements on behalf of the circle with the awareness and consensus of the *ICC Leadership Circle*.

**13.0 Amendments**

13.1 Amendments to this ***Ways of Leading ~ Ways of Seeing ~ Ways of Being*** document may be decided upon at an AGM of the ICC with the agreement of those in attendance.

13.1.1 The *Ways of Leading ~ Ways of Seeing ~ Ways of Being* document is considered as a living document created through circle process with its own spirit and always open to teachings, thoughts, feedback, and considerations from the *Indigenous Circle Chapter* as the ongoing process of the document continues to emerge.

13.1.2 The *ICC Leadership Circle* shall ensure that any proposed changes are prepared for distribution to active ICC members fifteen (15) days before the AGM.

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**Historical Context:** The ICC Executive first initiated discussions in 2016 to begin the process of decolonizing the Indigenous Circle's 2013 constitution and by-laws document, with an intentional Indiginizing lens of focus in 2021 towards a concept of relational shared circle process in leadership.

The following links provide the previous versions of the constitution and by-laws document, which was originally patterned after the CCPA template:

- [The 2013 version](#)
- [The 2017 version](#)



The current document, *Ways of Leading ~ Ways of Seeing ~ Ways of Being*, was composed across 2021 to 2023 through a shared circle process and consensus building with the ICC Leadership Circle and with the support and guidance of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers Council. The original 2023 document about our ‘Ways’ was accepted during the May 2023 Annual Gathering Meeting (AGM) of the ICC, then reviewed by the CCPA leadership with feedback provided in 2024, which led to edits submitted and accepted by both the Indigenous Circle and CCPA leadership in September 2024.