

SWEAT LODGES:

The following practices need to be followed when participating in the Sweat Lodge!

The following information about what to wear and bring should be made known to all participants prior to coming out.

What to bring?

- *Large Towel*, to cover your shoulders and/or legs (or two regular size).
- *Personal Water bottle* so that you may re-hydrate between rounds.
- *Personal snacks or juices* to keep your sugars up if needed.

What to wear?

- **MALES:**
- *Gym shorts*: are the most comfortable article of clothing to wear. You don't want to wear anything too tight because your body will need to cool down between rounds and tight clothing will not allow for that.
- *No shirt*: usually men go shirtless, but you will be allowed to wear a T-shirt if it makes you more comfortable.
- **FEMALES:**
- *A long skirt*: preferably mid-calf length and medium weight would be the most comfortable to wear. The reason for wearing a longer skirt is so that our back side and legs are covered when crawling in and out of the sweatlodge.
- *Medium to dark colored shirt*: lighter colored shirt's may fade and show your underclothing, so darker shirts are best.
- *Long nightgown*: a lot of women prefer to wear a mid-calf length nightgown into the sweatlodge as it is more comfortable.
- *Avoid heavy fabrics like denim* as they can make you overheat!
- *A small car blanket* can be brought into the lodge to sit on for comfort.
- *Women on their moon cycle are not permitted to attend the ceremony. This is for the safety of the participants and the lodge keeper. This is an act of respect and not one of segregation. Please call Walter to clarify any concerns or questions.*

What not to wear!

- *Jewelry*: any jewelry, other than wedding rings, are not allowed as they can get really hot and burn. Items such as: watches, rings, earrings, necklaces, barrettes, bracelets and hair clips/elastics should be avoided.
- Please, no spaghetti strap tops as your shoulders and arms will be exposed and disrespectful to the elder running the sweatlodge.

All of this will also be discussed with participants prior to preparing for going to the Sweat Lodge

The Process!

- Joel or Walter will guide you through the ceremony!
- This is a Teaching/Educational Sweat Lodge. The heat level is maintained at an acceptable level for most individuals. This should not be an uncomfortable endurance test. We approach it from a perspective of kindness and want every participant to feel safe and comfortable. (perhaps stretching their comfort zone a little bit)
- There will be 2 rounds of sweating and singing. Each round will take roughly 15 to 20 minutes and each has a specific meaning to it.
- In between the rounds you will be allowed to come out if necessary and rejuvenate via cold water and fresh air. This break usually last between about 5 – 10 minutes.
- If you feel that you cannot go back into the next round, it is ok to sit out.
- Before/after or in between the rounds, feel free to speak to Joel or Walter about your experience or anything else you may need to speak to them about.

Important To Note:

- There is no fire or smoke inside of the Sweat Lodge.
- Rocks are carefully brought in and placed in a pit and water is slowly sprinkled onto them creating a hot steam.
- It is pitch black (dark) inside Sweat Lodge. You can not see your hand in front of your face.

Protocol:

- *When the pipes are being filled:* The pipe carriers will be seated on the ground facing the fire pit, try to speak in a softer tone at this time so that they may concentrate on their prayers. Do not cross in front of them when they are filling their pipes as they will be facing east and this is the direction from which the grandfathers/mothers come. Going around the back of the lodge to get to the other side is best. When they are finished, you can resume as normal.
- *Bringing the rocks into the lodge:* When the helpers are bringing the rocks into the lodge please don't cross in front of them. The rocks need to be brought in without falling and hitting the ground. And, the rocks are hot and you don't want to get hurt.
- *When entering the sweat lodge:* face the door and make a full clockwise turn and say "to all my relations" (speaking this quietly is ok). This acknowledges the grandfathers/mothers and lets them know that you are participating.
- *When you are inside the lodge:* Once the door is closed it will be dark and you should only see the glow from the rocks. If you are having a hard time breathing; placing your towel over your nose and mouth helps. You can also lay down on your side and put your face to the ground and breathe in the cool air.