

Sharing Circle Introduction – *an example*

At the Indigenous Family Centre, we have weekly sharing circles. Below is the text I use to lead them.

You will notice that our sharing circle might not be completely traditional or done in a manner with which you are familiar. That is because we welcome people from many different backgrounds to our circle. Some of us are Cree, Ojibwe, Saukteaux, Inuit, Metis, Dene, Lakota, and more. We also welcome the participation of non-Indigenous people.

As for belief, some of us are Christian, some of us follow the spiritual traditions of our people, some of us do both, and some of us do neither. We do not discriminate, and we do not determine what you need to believe in order to participate.

We all carry different teachings. Some of you may feel strongly that women should wear skirts. If you are a woman who carries this teaching, we welcome you to wear a skirt. Some of us feel strongly that women should dress as they please. This is also accepted in our circle. We believe that following the Creator is a matter of the heart, and how we express this is a matter of personal belief and conscience.

One teaching we do hold high is that everyone is welcome here, everyone is respected, and everyone is equal. On this teaching, we will not move.

We welcome you here today with a spirit of love and acceptance and invite you to offer this to everyone in the circle, and beyond.

Shannon Perez served as the Canadian Ministries' Justice and Reconciliation Mobilizer for eight years. In the summer of 2021, Shannon transitioned to overseeing the Indigenous Family Centre located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where they envision healthy connected families. Shannon is a member of the Sayisi Dene First Nation, and lives in Winnipeg with her husband and children.