



- Through discussions with the federal government, we understand that there are resources available through FNIHB, such as protective equipment (e.g. masks, gloves, infrared thermometers), testing options, and nurse support, to help screen participants of our ceremonies, for those ceremonial leaders who wish to make use of these safety options.
- Ceremony is our way of life and is of prime importance. In spite of the current restrictions, there is always a way to stay connected to the Spirit. Everyone has to take responsibility in terms of attending any ceremony. Allow the spirit within you to help you make that decision. Ultimately, we must have our own personal faith in whatever we decide to do.
- We must show respect and support for each other as one makes a decision from their own territory. Traditionally, our ancestors taught us not to impose but to ask with respect and dignity. Our role here is highlight how we relate to the higher spiritual power. Everyone has to accept responsibility in making our own decisions.
- What is important for all of us to consider is how we can individually share a spirit of kindness towards the land. How do we share kindness for each other?
- This pandemic has brought us together as families. This is a time we can use to teach the children the values and teachings of our ancestors.
- Unfortunately, this isolation has brought about an increase in domestic violence, especially violence against women. This is a reflection of those that have lost their way as spiritual people, giving us all the more reason for the teachings of our ancestors to be shared.
- We honour, respect and hold sacred the *Ogimaakwe*, in the Anishinaabe language meaning “the life-givers” of our Nations. We must strive to protect and hold a place for the sacred role of the women and mothers of our communities and our Nations. The *Ogimaakwe*, like Mother Earth herself, are the source of life that give us everything we need to live – the food, the water, the medicines, the teachings and the love that our children need to survive. They are our early childhood educators, teaching us morals and values, and loving and caring for us as the matriarchs of our families.

As Elders, we feel the biggest challenge that humanity is facing is our failure to know and acknowledge our spiritual identity, that holds the original instructions we were all given to manifest our true humanity – simply, to show kindness for all life.

