

# Sweat Lodge Ceremonies

---



The Sweat Lodge is a prayer and cleansing ceremony that brings together Human, Animal, Plant, and Stone spirits. It represents cleansing and renewal for a person by symbolically returning to the womb of Mother Earth. Sweat Lodges in different forms have been utilized by tribal communities in many states and Canada for as long as anyone can remember. The Sweat Lodge is usually constructed from willows (which represent the ribs of Mother Earth), it is covered with hides, blankets, or carpets and the floor of the lodge may be covered with blankets, carpets, or sage and cedar boughs. Heated stones are brought into the lodge by the Rock Man and usually placed in the center of the lodge. The hot stones are smudged with cedar, tobacco, or sage by the Sweat Lodge leader. Water is then poured a several times during 4 or more Rounds where prayers are shared and offered to the Creator. A Sweat Lodge usually begins with an opening prayer and each Round includes many prayer songs by the leader and prayers offered by individual participants. The leader usually explains the protocol for entering and leaving the Sweat Lodge. Often food and water is shared between Rounds and after the ceremony.

**TARGET POPULATION:** Anybody

**RISK FACTORS ADDRESSED:**

Community DOMAIN

- ❖ Community laws and norms favorable to towards drug use, firearms, and crime (Historical Trauma and termination).
- ❖ Addresses low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization.

FAMILY DOMAIN

- ❖ Family conflict
- ❖ Family history of the problem behavior.
- ❖ Family management problems
- ❖ Favorable parental attitudes in involvement in the behavior

**PROTECTIVE FACTORS ADDRESSED:**

- ❖ Bonding
- ❖ Healthy beliefs and clear standards
- ❖ Individual characteristics
- ❖ Interpersonal relationships

**IOM Strategies**

- ❖ Prevention
- ❖ Treatment
- ❖ Aftercare

**KEY ELEMENTS:**

***Historical Recognition***

- Traditions and songs
- Elders teaching songs, prayers & protocol
- Traditional opening
- Community involvement

- Intertribal participation

**Process**

- Sweat Lodge Leader
- Gathering place
- Transportation for Sweat Lodge Leader and helpers
- Community support for financial needs
- Organizational support
- Coordination of participants and volunteers

**Materials**

- Firewood
- Willows for lodge
- Covering materials
- Sweat rocks
- Water
- Traditional food

**OPTIONAL ELEMENTS:**

---

- ❖ Food
- ❖ Volunteers
- ❖ Elder participation

Resources and/or Examples: Sweat Lodge Leaders at several tribes

**EXAMPLE OUTCOMES:**

EDUCATIONAL: Increase knowledge of cultural songs and prayers  
ATTITUDINAL: Identification of participants to their culture.  
BEHAVIORAL: Develop a healthy lifestyle

Approval Date 11-23-08