

NDNAEU 1: Sacred Relatives

How We Relate to Everything

Native people practice a deep interconnectedness with the land, the resources, the water, all living things and all human beings. Land stewardship, respect for all 2 legged, 4 legged, winged, crawlers and swimmers and a strong belief in the sacredness of all human beings are key elements of our spirituality.



The Seven Teachings

1. Love – Bald Eagle, 2. Honesty – Giant, 3. Truth – Turtle, 4. Respect – Buffalo, 5. Humility – Wolf, 6. Bravery – Bear, 7. Wisdom - Beaver

"You really can't know something unless you practice it."

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Alex Decoteau

NDNAEU 2: Learning & Storytelling

How We Promote & Sustain Our Cultures, Languages & Traditions

Traditional teaching and the passing on of knowledge and wisdom was done through storytelling, song, ceremony and daily way of life, often incorporating specific gender and age specific responsibilities. These continue to be some of the best modes for learning for both Native and non-Native learners.



“We need to be the ones in control of our narrative. We’ve waited long enough and let someone else tell our story, now we are going to take control and our hand is going to be on that pen.”

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Kade Ferris

NDNAEU 3: Sharing & Generosity

How We Promote & Sustain Our Cultures, Languages & Traditions

Native people have rich traditions of sharing and generosity which include gifting, shared meals, Pow Wow gatherings, shared living spaces and care for relatives, including the environment, natural resources and waters.



“The younger people had to find a way to get ahold of tobacco... tobacco was kind of hard to get. They had to get tobacco to GIVE tobacco to their father or their grandfather to tell them a story.”

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Elder, Jesse Cree

NDNAEU 4: Sense of Humor

How We Promote & Sustain Our Cultures, Languages & Traditions

Native people have a rich history of shared sense of humor that includes teaching stories involving Iktomi, Maymaygwise and Nanabozhoo. These stories and this unique sense of humor continue to support our resiliency and cohesiveness.



“This one plays all “flat” notes...”

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Elder, Dan Jerome

NDNAEU 5: Tribal Policies, Treaties & Sovereignty

How We Respond to & Contribute to All of Society from Local to Global

Native people practice self-determination, developing tribal policies and practicing political activism. Despite a history of US policies and Treaties that have often been detrimental, Native people are members of sovereign nations that predate the US government.



“Monday morning, in the newspaper, the BIA advertised 45 parcels of land for oil development on the Turtle Mountain Reservation... we went into the Tribal Council meeting on Tuesday morning... and presented a new resolution to... ban fracking on the Turtle Mountain Reservation.”

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Elder, Carol Davis

NDNAEU 6: Native Contributions

How We Respond to & Contribute to All of Society from Local to Global

Native people continue to contribute to all levels of society from local to global in diverse fields including medicine, science, government, education, economics, art, music, and many more.



“If you’re always the smartest person in the room, you need to look at who you are keeping company with, because you’re never going to learn, you’re never going to grow.”

Pam Belgard, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

NDNAEU 7: Native Identity

Who We Are

Individual and communal identity is defined and supported by shared Native languages, kinship systems, Tiospaye, Clan structures, traditional teachings, values, sacred laws and ceremonies. A continuum of tribal identity, unique to each individual, ranges from assimilated to traditional lifestyle. There is no “generic American Indian”.



“We’re best when we are working collaboratively together and accepting and honoring each other no matter where we’re from.”

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Dr. Teresa Delorme