

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

HEALING BLANKET WORKSHOP

An activity developed by the MNO Victim Services Program



Métis Healing Blanket Workshop at the WSMNO Leadership Gathering, Toronto ON, March 2013.

Objective: To create a Métis Healing Blanket that will empower women and help them regain or reaffirm their self-esteem, self-worth and see their beauty and strength from within. Many women, especially those that are survivors of violence and abuse, have moments in their lives where they question their own value and even feel worthless. Once complete, the blanket itself represents inner beauty and strength and the gifting of the blanket symbolizes a 'blanket of care' which will serve as a reminder that the women are important, cared for and loved within the Métis Nation. This activity can also be used to promote self-care and/or health and well-being.

Supplies needed per person

- 2 pieces of fabric at 1.5 meters each (polar fleece works best). One piece should be solid and the 2nd piece can have patterns.
- 1 pair of fabric scissors
- Fabric paint or fabric markers
- Ruler (optional)



Notes from Your Victim Services Coordinator

Background Information #1 Begin this activity with a teaching that Métis women, all women, are life givers, life sustainers and have been given the most precious gift to carry life (you may share a teaching that was shared with you or use traditional storytelling).

Background Information #2 Continue with more information on a Métis woman's traditional role. The following words were created as a guide but please feel free to add your own teachings and knowledge.

“Women are meant to be loved, honoured, respected and valued. Somewhere along this path of Creation we may have been taught that we are not valued, respected loved and cared for. That could include having our partners and loved ones harm us, or treat us as if we are not worthy of love. Over time as women we sometimes start to believe that we are ‘less than’ and begin to forget our original teaching as women.”

“What you are going to do here today is create your blanket of care, which will serve as your reminder that you are important, you are cared for and you are loved.”



The gifting of a Métis Healing Blanket to the organizers of the Walking with Our Sisters Exhibit, Sault Saint Marie, ON, May 2014.

Background Information #3 Continue with explaining the significance of blankets to the Métis people. The following excerpts were created as a sample and you are encouraged to add your own teachings and knowledge to your workshop.

“Blankets help to represent who we are as people. We gift blankets to our new babies, our elderly and to families when they are in need, for celebration and acknowledgement.

Our blankets were also a survival tool. Today we are gifting you with a blanket to have to remind you, that you are women and you should be honoured for the gifts you carry.

Instructions for building your blanket

Step #1 Get your participants to take the solid piece of fabric and lay it flat, have them use the fabric makers/paint to write uplifting words of encouragement, love, respect, words that will help them to remember how special they are.

Words and symbols should be positive, hopeful and uplifting: Honour, love, kindness, respect, mom, sister, life carrier, women, power, voice, laugh, live etc.



Step #2 Once you have completed this part take a break, especially if you used paint and it needs to dry.

Step #3 Place the patterned fabric over top of the plain fabric with the positive words. Use scissors to cut you blanket into a fringe pattern, cutting along all four sides of both blankets together. Cut the fringe length approximately 2-3 inches up and you will cut the fringes approximately 1–3 inches apart.



Step #4 When you have finished making your fringed pattern, you are ready to start tying you blanket together. On each of the four corners cut a square out of the corner so the blanket will not bunch and will allow for the blanket to have a rounded corner.



Step #5 While the participants are tying the blanket together sing together or listen to Métis music, tell stories of love and of good memories as you are binding the medicine that you have created with words you have embedded in the blanket.



Step #6 Awaken your blanket through ceremony so that the words and process of making this piece become a powerful tool or medicine. Have your participants hold their blankets, offer a prayer and smudge (optional).





Step #7 Have participants join in a circle and have each woman assist the woman on her right side to wrap her blanket around herself or over her shoulders. After each woman has their blankets wrapped around themselves share with them that the blanket they have created will be their blanket to cuddle with, cover with and have as a reminder of how beautiful they are and how as Métis people this blanket signifies that you are loved, honoured and respected.

If you have any further questions about this Métis Healing Blanket workshop please contact the MNO Victim Services Program at 613-798-1488.