

Aboriginal Circle

THE ROLE OF ABORIGINAL ELDERS

Aboriginal communities consider Elders to be very special people. An Elder is a person who gives advice and is able to teach traditions to other community members. Elders are chosen for their wisdom and ability to listen, as well as for their life experience.

Frank Wesley fulfils his role as Elder very well; everyone in his community seeks his advice.



Mr. Wesley, 65, is an Ojibway originally from Black Sioux Lake, Ontario, and now lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Mr. Wesley acts as a confidant and spiritual guide for youngsters, a mediator and counselor with women's groups, and is an adviser to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

Among other things, young people count on his respect and wisdom. Mr. Wesley has helped several distressed youth regain their confidence. He believes that teamwork often provides a better chance of success, and that discipline is first learned at home. His experience and good advice are greatly appreciated.

"Young people represent our future," he says. "That is why it's important to work with them." Mr. Wesley knows what he is talking about — he has 28 grandchildren!

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

The sacred pipe was long-stemmed and Aboriginal communities used it for ceremonies. To smoke the sacred pipe with someone symbolized a pledge of reconciliation, peace and friendship. Elders also used the sacred pipe to consult the Spirits, in order to enlighten people in making the right decisions.



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