

We have had numerous requests at UTFAV for information about a Traditional pamphlet series and how it can help survivors of Domestic Violence. Please see this as a starting place on your road for healing and recovery ~ The UTFAV Team



Tobacco, also traditionally called **Asema**, is often associated with the east direction of new beginnings. A person in crisis of domestic abuse will find tobacco will help them with traditional solutions. It is a medicine that many traditionalist and spiritual leaders tell us, always comes first. When a person request help, they carefully ask the question and wait with their tobacco. Traditionally, tobacco was given to us by our Creator to help us communicate with him our thoughts and feelings as we pray for our loved ones and Creation.

Tobacco comes in many forms. You can purchase loose cigarette or pipe tobacco at a store. The purest form, with no additional ingredients is preferred. Tobacco seeds, considered very sacred, are often available and you can grow your own tobacco for private use. There are rules associated with how to grow your

medicines. When in doubt, bring your tobacco to a traditional person or elder and ask.

Tobacco can be made into prayer offerings. It may be kept in a wooden bowl or placed in a cloth or buckskin bag made for that purpose.

Tobacco can also be made into a tobacco tie for giving; this is made by cutting a small two inch square cotton cloth of any color and placing tobacco in the center of the cloth and tying the ends with a ribbon or yarn. Your prayer is put into your tobacco tie. Tobacco use varies with your need. It can be sprinkled on the ground as you say your daily prayers; it can be smoked in a sacred pipe. It can be sprinkled on the waters with your prayers.



Sage is also called, **mashkodewashk** and is often associated with the west direction. Its smoke is used for releasing what is troubling the mind and for removing negative energy and to prepare a person for ceremonies and teachings. If you have experienced an abusive situation, the burning of sage in your home would bring you a sense of peace from the negative emotions. It is also used to cleanse the home and sacred items such as an eagle feathers. Sage has other medicinal uses

depending on the instructions from your tribe or elder. There are many types of sage, most often used is Buffalo Sage, Prairie Sage and California sage. Sage is used when it is in dried form. It can be rolled into a tiny ½ ball and lit with a match in a smudge shell. It can be purchased in a bundle stick form and burnt to a purifying smudge. It can be also made into a tea. Sage can be purchased or grown from seed.



Sweetgrass also called **wiingashk** is often called the hair of Mother Earth and is associated with the north direction. It is said that when we burn sweetgrass, the grandfathers and grandmothers in the spirit world are as stars, and they see us and come close to hear our prayers. It has a sweet aroma that reminds people of their gentleness, love, and kindness. Our prayers are carried in the smoke by the grandmothers and grandfathers to the Creator. When we smudge, we cleanse ourselves by wafting the smoke with our hands over parts of our body. The prayer is that our minds have clarity of thought, that our hands do good work, and that from our mouth comes the truth.

When a woman or man experiences a negative situation the burning of sweetgrass brings calmness to the room and everyone around the room. When used in a healing circle or talking circle it brings positive energy. Many traditional people place a braid of sweet grass in their cars for the pleasant aroma and for the medicine prayer for travel.

The three-stranded braid is also seen as representing our ancestors, ourselves and the children not yet here. Everything we do contribute to the children for the future.



Cedar, often called Giizhik, is a sacred medicine of the south direction. A tobacco offering is made before it is picked. You take cedar from the largest tree and offer your prayers explaining how you will use the cedar and identify who you are. Doing this insures you will get the full spiritual and medicinal use of the cedar. Cedar use varies according to the tribe or people that use cedar. When it is scarce, or comes from afar, the medicine is thought to be stronger.

Cedar is a medicine known for its purification properties and is often used as a smudge when dried. Cedar is a protection medicine as well. Many dancers

place fresh cedar in their moccasins or shoes when they travel to a pow wow or ceremony. This is believed to keep their energy pure.

Cedar is used for sweat lodge ceremonies and small pieces of cedar are cleaned from the branches. The cedar is placed dark side down on the crescent mound located behind the fire area. Cedar is used to make the spirit path from the fire pit to the sweat lodge center. It is also placed on the hot rocks as they are placed in the sweat lodge. The story of cedar is told during the teaching of the sweat lodge.

When a person has been in great stress or trauma, a cedar bath is sometimes made for comfort and healing to the body by adding cedar from the branches, cooked to an amber color and added to the bath water.

A cedar bath is sometimes used in funeral ceremonies. This purifies the body for the spirit ceremony that is to take place. It is a great honor to do this.

For any questions about these sacred medicines, offer tobacco to your tribal elder or spiritual leader. Megwetch.

The Four Sacred Medicines

Uniting Three Fires Against Violence

Helping and Healing from all Directions



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