

10 Things You Didn't Know About Aboriginal Elders

1. An elder is not necessarily an older person.

2. A First Nations' Elder is defined as someone who has spent many years as an elder's helper and has now been given the right to perform ceremonies.

3. A Métis Elder is defined as someone who carries a large amount of knowledge about Métis history and culture and who is well-known and respected within the Métis community.

4. When you meet an Elder for the first time, use a light handshake (soft grip, one shake).

5. It is considered respectful and polite to listen when an Elder is speaking.

6. When you first meet an elder, it is considered disrespectful to make direct eye contact. Try focusing on the mouth instead.

7. Elders perform a variety of functions in the Aboriginal community. They are sought for advice, to say a prayer, or to perform a specific ceremony.

8. The protocol is to offer the Elder tea or refreshments and make sure they are comfortable before making your request.

9. If you want to ask a First Nation's Elder to perform a ceremony, you should offer them tobacco. If the Elder accepts your tobacco, then they have agreed to your request.

10. There is a protocol to offer the Elder a gift or some form of appreciation after they have complied with your request.



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