

SMUDGING: A NECESSARY MINDFULNESS EXERCISE

NWAC Fact Sheet

Collaboratively we can continue to put emphasis on the importance of self-care and maintenance of well-being. Mental and emotional health are pillars in our overall health. Finding healthy ways to cope during hard times is important to our well-being and smudging offers many healing and mindful benefits. Smudging can be understood as the practise of cleansing using plant medicines. Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present and aware. Together, they offer holistic healing; even as few as five minutes each day can have life changing effects on health and wellbeing.



Smudging provides a sense of calm and safety, while allowing us to let go of negative feelings and thoughts. Smudging and mindfulness has numerous benefits. Practicing mindfulness allows a person to become not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around them. Everyone naturally possess the ability to be mindful, and a person can strengthen this skill with daily practice. The goal of mindfulness is to awaken the inner workings of our mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual processes.

Smudging is completely voluntary and is used in many ways. It is a purification, or healing practice—not to be confused as a religious practice. No one should feel pressured to participate in smudging. It is completely acceptable to choose not to practice smudging and seek out other avenues for mindfulness and healing.

There is no wrong way to smudge. Be intuitive and use your senses to guide the practice. It is imperative that you come to the practice, or space, to smudge respectfully, with a good heart, and an open mind.

This practice is to ensure we are speaking, hearing, seeing, and feeling in a kind and respectful manner. Smudging helps us to find words we need to share, while cleansing our mind and offering protection.

To achieve best spiritual understanding, it is recommended you ask questions and communicate with an Elder, or Knowledge Keeper, that you trust and respect.

What you need (basics) to smudge:

- A sage bundle, smudge stick, or your preferred medicine.
- A seashell or bowl (bowls can be either ceramic, clay, or glass).
- A feather.
- Matches or a lighter.
- A quiet space.



How to begin smudging:

- Place the grounded medicine in a shell or smudge dish.
- Light it carefully and let the flame go out on its own. Let the smoke start to rise.
- Use your feather to keep the smoke active.
- Some examples of techniques include 'washing' your hands in the smoke, before bringing smoke to your head, eyes, mouth, ears, and heart.
- Let the smoke naturally burn out.

While inhaling the medicines, be mindful of how your body feels, what you hear, see, and feel.

Take a moment to just experience your senses.

You can also practice these simple affirmations:

- I am smudging to think calm and clearly.
- I am smudging to see calm and clearly.
- I am smudging to hear calm and clearly.
- I am smudging to speak calm and clearly.
- I am smudging to feel calm and clear.



Resources

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

<https://www.georgiancollege.ca/wp-content/uploads/Smudging-StaffNews.pdf>

<https://akgshelter.ca/smudging/>

<https://www.7generations.org/learn-how-to-smudge/>