

# Hope during COVID-19



## Supporting our wellness during COVID-19

This fact sheet is part of Thunderbird Partnership Foundation's commitment to provide culturally-grounded and strength-based supports for First Nations people during COVID-19. These resources can provide guidance as our communities navigate the current global health crisis, while continuing to face existing health challenges, including substance use and mental health issues.

Watch any newscast these days and you can quickly begin to feel fear, and lose hope.

Whether it's stories about toilet paper hoarders, or a run on hand sanitizer, fear can create the fight, flight or freeze response.

When this happens, we can start to think selfishly.

This sense of fear can hit our immune system. It shuts down our prefrontal cortex in our brain, so our immune system can't operate to its full potential. It can also lead us to stop caring about ourselves and others.

Our Elders remind us that a connection to our identity, worldview and values can help us find hope to support our wellness. Traditional wisdom tells us that every generation of people who have walked the earth have faced challenges, whether it's a war, an environmental disaster or a pandemic. We also know that each generation responds based on resources available at the time. This knowledge is grounded in belief that is supported by evidence found in the story of creation:

*"The Great Spirit ensured everything we would need, forever and all time was placed within Creation from the very beginning."*

Elder Jim Dumont

Changing our perspective gives us HOPE. The feeling of hope activates our brain to move away from the fight-flight mode. Reconnecting with the land reminds us of the things that are a pattern for living a good life. Drinking maple sap, cedar tea or giving thanks can give us what we need to support our wellbeing, our immune system and nurture hope for ourselves and our loved ones.

## TIPS TO NURTURE HOPE DURING COVID-19

- Look to the sky, stars, moon and sun to remember there is something bigger and greater than us
- Nurture a connection to land; enjoy the rebirth and reawakening of energy from the sun
- Be grateful for what you have: a warm bed, food and safe water
- Spend time with those you care about; stay safe with physical distancing
- Do things we often don't have time for in modern times; teach your kids the old games you used to play
- Do something to give others hope and make them feel safe; send a card to an Elder or friend
- Give expression to your fears in a safe way, through prayer or ceremony
- Talk about your hopes for the future

## REFERENCES

**Hopkins, Dr. Carol. (2020)**

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First Nations Health Managers Association Town Hall, April 9, 2020. [www.ihtoday.ca/townhall](http://www.ihtoday.ca/townhall)

For more information, visit: [thunderbirdpf.org/covid-19](https://thunderbirdpf.org/covid-19)