

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

### **Your Name and Colors**

Everything in Creation has a name. The trees, animals, plants, fish, water and air all have names. When we receive our spirit name, we know who we are in Creation. We are able to identify ourselves when we communicate with the spirit of each thing in Creation. For those men or women who are healing from Domestic Violence or Sexual Assault, it is very important for them to know they have the right to know their spirit name. You use your name for healing, for putting down your tobacco, and giving thanks.

It is never too late to get your spirit name or colors. The spirits wait for you to come to them for a name. The Traditional People know this because it has happened in our communities historically and many of us do not know the teachings, instead they wait for us to come to them. A spirit name is important for a good beginning, strong prayers and for living a good life.

Elders and healers say that when your spirit comes into the world, your name

and your colors follow you to the spirit door. It is said your spirit name is the name you had before you came into this world.

Your spirit name is said to be fifty percent of your healing and balance because, with it, you know who you are, where you belong, where you are going and where you came from.

Today, we can offer tobacco to a Traditional Healer, Spiritual Healer or Medicine Person who has the ability to call names and colors through the spirit door. We can also seek our name through the shaking tent ceremony.

The person we ask to give us our name may use special songs to call in our names and colors. A person who gives names has earned the right. He or she should know the spirit ceremony and the power that your name carries. It is important for you to know the story of how your name was found and given. This person will also give you instructions on how to care for your name and what that name means.

We can express your gratitude to the person who gives us our name and colors by offering tobacco and gifts.

Everything in Creation has a color that represents a certain type of power. When you wear your colors, it is considered the good life that keeps you

straight and walking in a good way. Your colors are associated with your name and when you feast your name, you are also including your colors.

### **Honoring your Name and Colors**

You need to find a path to honor your spirit name and colors through different ceremonies. You can make food offerings during the year for your name. These can be monthly with the moon cycle or four times a year, at the changing of the seasons, or once a year. You must always use your spirit name in ceremony.

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As our awareness and knowledge of our traditions and culture increase, so do our honor and respect for these ways. This has not always been the case in some communities. There are always those who present themselves as Healers, Elders or Medicine People who have not earned that title and may use the teachings and medicines in the wrong way. It is important for everyone, especially young people, to be aware of this and to exercise caution when they seek healing, teachings or advice. It is advisable to consult with people whom you trust to get referrals to respected and

recognized Traditional Elders, Healers or Medicine People.

### **How do I find someone to ask for my spirit name?**

Contact your nearest Tribal Center for more information by phone or in person. Tribes are the best resource for finding tribal elders, traditional healers or spiritual leaders who are recognized by the community as having the gift of naming in your area. For Michigan Federally Recognized Tribes you can find a list of tribes at our United Three Fires Against Violence web site. [www.utfav.org](http://www.utfav.org).

### **What should you say?**

Give your name, your tribe and ask to be in contact with a tribal elder, spiritual leader or traditional healer or medicine person that has the ability to give spirit names. Give your contact phone number. Keep trying in case you do not reach the right person the first time.

### **How do you request your Spirit name?**

This request can be talked about on the phone but a gift of natural tobacco must be given in person to the tribal elder, traditional healer or spiritual leaders in question. Tobacco can be purchased at a store and presented in an unopened container or you can give

a tobacco tie. Give as much information as you can such as your Indian family name, your tribe, the date and time you were born. If your tobacco is accepted, be patient and wait for the namer to make arrangements for your naming ceremony.

### **What is a naming ceremony?**

A naming ceremony can be very simple to very elaborate. It can be given by a spiritual leader or traditional healer in an office setting, such as Indian Tribal Health. It can be held in your home. Usually a person receiving a spirit name will give a gift in appreciation to those in attendance. The gifts can be simple or elaborate such as a braid of sweet grass, a homemade article of clothing, a beaded item, tobacco ties or a gift of food. You may have a private feast in your home where you invite your close friends and family members to honor your new name and colors. Use your name often and remember the story of your name. Wear your colors proudly.

***For any questions about finding your Indian name and your color, offer tobacco to a tribal elder, traditional healer or spiritual leader.***

Information shared in this pamphlet was used with permission from Anishnawbe Health Toronto <http://www.aht.ca>

## **Spirit Names, Ceremony, and Colors**

### **Uniting Three Fires Against Violence**

*Helping and Healing from all Directions*



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