

# INTERGENERATIONAL STORYTELLING CIRCLE



Talking circles are a form of Indigenous pedagogy based on sacred traditions of **sharing circles**. They establish a safe environment in which every individual in the circle has the opportunity to speak and be heard, respected, and valued by the rest of the participants. According to **Barkaskas and Gladwin (2021)**, “Communities use talking circles as part of ceremonial, healing, educational, and legal systems, depending upon intentions and contexts, and also use them as a way of bringing people together to pass on cultural knowledges, practices, and values.”

This Intergenerational Storytelling Circle is an opportunity to connect Indigenous Elders with youth leaders, and community members to collectively discuss actionable climate solutions informed by lessons and understandings that Indigenous communities hold about the reciprocal relationship between humans and the natural world. These conversations will also highlight the necessity to form equitable partnerships with Indigenous peoples in order to meet our climate goals, keeping holistic and interconnected worldviews at the forefront of our collective race to net-zero.

## ▶ IMPACT

There is a lot to learn from Indigenous knowledge and land practices, especially when it comes to concepts of a regenerative and waste-free economy and the interconnection between humans and the natural environment. Indigenous knowledge systems include **climate solutions** that evolved to adapt to changes in the natural environment and have been passed down for generations on end, therefore, they must be preserved and accounted for in today’s climate actions. Despite this, there is a known **history of inadequate attempts** to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into Canada’s climate action plans and to build relationships between the government and Indigenous partners. Hosting an intergenerational storytelling circle is one way to **remember forward** and bridge this gap between government climate action recommendations and the climate knowledge and solutions that have worked for generations on end and adapting them to fit the needs of the present and future challenges. This event will

focus on sharing stories and developing connections with the land through learning from the lived experiences of Indigenous Elders, while providing young people an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings as they relate to the discussion topics of the storytelling circle. This action is meant to facilitate a human-centered context to local climate challenges and to create meaningful and emotional connections to these issues, with the end goal of formulating a set of achievable solutions encouraging all who participated to take action on climate in their everyday lives.

The recommendations should take into account the existing assets and services available to the community where the activity is being hosted. This event is meant to encourage cross-cultural learning, community building, and intergenerational collaboration, all while raising awareness about everyday actions that can help to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

# ▶ HOW TO HOST AN INTERGENERATIONAL STORYTELLING CIRCLE

## ▶ STEP 1: PRELIMINARY EVENT PLANNING

- **Acknowledge the cultural origins** of the storytelling circle and use this awareness to guide your planning process.
- Identify your goals and objectives of hosting this event, what specific themes of climate and energy challenges do you wish to address and what questions will you ask to guide conversations, and how will you incorporate solutions-building into the discussion? These are the types of questions you will want to think about as you plan this event
- Reach out to Indigenous-led organizations in your neighbourhood to request a meeting with Elders and other leaders in the community
- Choose a safe, secure, and comfortable location, free from distractions or disruptions to host the event.



## ▶ STEP 2: HOST THE EVENT AND TRACK YOUR IMPACT

- On the day of the event, arrive early for set up.
- Start the event by introducing yourself, the proposed discussion points you have already prepared, and the guest speakers. As the organizer, you will want to facilitate discussions to encourage active participation from all attendees
- Take note of any key messages and lessons learned from the Storytelling Circle
- Create a list of solutions discussed throughout the event and work with the other event attendees to create an Indigenous Knowledge-informed and inclusive local climate action plan
- Follow up with event attendees to put your plans into motion
- With the consent and approval of all your attendees, take photos throughout the event and share them along with your impact results on social media and feel free to share your results and photos with us at [research@studentenergy.org](mailto:research@studentenergy.org) so we can see your awesome work!

Have fun!





## ▶ REFERENCES

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