

#VIOLENCESTOPSWITHME

COMMITMENT STICK INITIATIVE
TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

AN EVENT PROMOTION GUIDE FOR FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness



“By picking up this Commitment Stick, I pledge to live violence free and to help end violence against women, because women are sacred, givers of life, to be honoured and respected.”

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JOIN ESK'ETEMC!



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START HERE

“Esk’etemc vision is that we strive to stand with dignity before our Elders and children that will not allow another generation of our women and children fall victim to a cycle of abuse and violence.”

– CHIEF CHARLENE BELLEAU

All First Nations communities in BC are eligible for a \$1,000 grant toward hosting an event or ceremony focused on committing to help eliminate violence against women. We created this kit to help you plan and raise awareness of your event or ceremony.

As part of the First Nations Health Authority's commitment to help end violence against Indigenous women, and in recognition of the fact that we must all commit to this together, the FNHA will be supporting commitment ceremonies and events in First Nations communities across BC.

We will be administering grants of \$1,000 to any First Nations community or organization (or partner organization) that would like to hold an event or ceremony focusing on committing to help end violence against Indigenous women.



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The Story of the Commitment Sticks

Esk'etemc Commitment Sticks are symbols of a personal commitment to live violence free and a commitment to actively stop violence against Indigenous women and girls.

[CLICK TO WATCH](#) Esk'etemc (Alkali) Chief Charlene Belleau speak about how we can do our part to end violence against Indigenous women.



The idea of the Commitment Sticks started with Alkali Lake (Esk'etemc) Elder Fred Johnson Sr., with the support of Chief Charlene Belleau. The Commitment Sticks represent working together on issues involving violence against Indigenous women and girls.

“Violence against Indigenous women and girls is not just an issue now that it’s before the media and the public—it’s been an issue for several years,” says Chief Belleau. “The government and the police may now have their programs, policies and procedures, but at the end of the day, violence against our women is also a community responsibility. So my push is for us to provide leadership and to do something ourselves, without worrying about what the government or police are doing about it. We might not be able to control what’s going on in a big city or anywhere else, but we can start with our own families and communities and Nations.”

Commitment sticks are concerned with this issue, an issue that we can—and must—address. They flow from the idea that we must be involved in our own healing; it’s not a matter of bringing in “experts” who can fix the community, but instead it’s us, our culture, our leaders—guided by tradition and ceremony—that can help us.

Esk'etemc frontline workers and leadership work together and all agree that the cycle of intergenerational trauma, including violence, has to stop with us. Regardless of whether we were abused at residential school, we must not pass it on to our children. Each man has signed a pledge to live violence free, stop violence against women and hold other men accountable. They keep their pledges on little cards in their wallets.

Elder Fred Johnson and his family prepare each commitment stick with prayer.

Commitment sticks are a gift from the Esk'etemc community, who are honoured to have Hereditary Chiefs, Chiefs and frontline workers take up this commitment. Working together and being proactive will support families that experience the trauma associated with violence and abuse.



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Commitment Stick FAQs

Q: What are Commitment Sticks?

A: Esk'etemc (Alkali) Elder Fred Johnson designed Commitment Sticks to signify the sacred responsibilities we have for the health and safety of our Indigenous women and girls, as well as to remind us of their infinite value. The act of picking up a Commitment Stick symbolizes a personal and professional commitment of time to help eliminate violence against Indigenous women and girls. A lot of prayer and ceremony goes into the creation of a Commitment Stick; they are also meant to help us cleanse our minds, bodies and spirits of any violence we may have perpetrated against Indigenous women and girls.

Q: Who has picked up Commitment Sticks as a symbol of their commitment?

A: One venue where Commitment Sticks were publicly picked up was at Gathering Wisdom in 2015. Over 120 Chiefs and leaders held the sticks high and committed to live violence free, and to collectively work together to stop violence against Indigenous women and girls. They acknowledged that honouring our women -- our grandmothers, mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, partners and nieces -- will bring balance back into our lives and ensure healthy and strong families and communities into the future.

Q: What is the meaning behind the design of the Commitment Sticks?

A: The colours of the Commitment Stick represent the need for the four races to work together to stop violence against Indigenous women and girls, with an understanding that we are all equally valuable. With the red, we honour and mourn our murdered and missing Indigenous women; with the yellow, we honour our breath of life; with the black, we honour our body; and with the white, we honour the knowledge and wisdom of the Elders.

Q: How can I get involved?

A: We encourage all BC First Nation communities to host an event of their own. For eligibility and application information please visit www.fnha/commitmentstick



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How to Promote Your Commitment Stick Event

INVITE YOUR LOCAL MEDIA

We have created a template press release for you to use if you are planning an event where you would like to invite local media to cover it. You can find the draft press release here or link to it on our FNHA website at:

www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

If you have any questions about these templates, please email media@fnha.ca for assistance!

DRAFT NEWS RELEASE

**<< Insert Community Name>>
COMMITTS TO FIGHT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN!**

For Immediate Release

[Date of Release]

<<insert city or traditional territory, BC>> -- On Date at Time, Community Name is holding a "Commitment-Stick" ceremony, as part of a provincial initiative, to collectively and individually commit to helping end violence against Indigenous women and girls at the community level.

Commitment sticks symbolize a personal and professional commitment to live violence-free and to stop violence against Indigenous women and girls.

[Community Name]'s [one hour] ceremony will include [2-3 sentences describing activities, environment, goals, perspective]

<<Insert your spokesperson quote here>> e.g.

"I think our communities could really benefit from this kind of a ceremony," said Esk'etemc (Alkali Lake) Kukpi7 (Chief) Charlene Belleau. "Violence against women is not just an issue now because it's before the media and public; it's been there all of our lives. The government and the RCMP may now have programs, policies and procedures to deal with this issue, but really, at the end of the day, violence against women is also a community responsibility. We need to look inside as well as outside."

Not only is the goal of [Community Name]'s Commitment Stick ceremony to stop violence against Indigenous women and girls, it is also to cleanse community members' minds, bodies and spirits of the violence that they themselves may have perpetuated in their communities.

The First Nations Health Authority is proud to support First Nations communities in BC in creating Commitment Stick ceremonies that reflect each community's unique needs and goals. FNHA provides \$1,000 grants to interested communities.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Name <<Insert your media contact/spokesperson here>>

Email

Phone: XXX-XXX-XXX

FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY

Media@fnha.ca

604-831-4898



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How to Promote Your Commitment Stick Event

INVITE LOCAL PARTNERS

We also encourage you to invite local partners to your Commitment Stick event if you see fit.

We have created a draft invite letter and invite you to tweak it as you see fit for your needs. Link to this template on our FNHA website at: www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

DRAFT PARTNERS INVITE LETTER

Dear **[insert health partner]**,

We are pleased to invite you and your team to participate in our community's Commitment Stick ceremony. At the ceremony, **[Community Name]** will collectively and individually commit to helping end violence against Indigenous women and girls at the community level. **On Date at Time, Community Name** is holding a "Commitment-Stick" ceremony to ...

Our "Commitment-Stick" ceremony / event will feature "Commitment Sticks" made by Alkali (Esketemc) Elder Fred Johnson Sr and his son Fred Johnson Jr. These beautiful sticks signify each owner's personal and professional commitment to live violence free and to stop violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Please join us at **[insert location]** on **[insert date]** to celebrate our commitment to our future and cleansing from our past cycle of violence. We view this as a positive opportunity to come together in a celebratory environment rather than a health care environment.

We also invite you and your team to take part in FNHA's "Commitment to End Violence Against Indigenous Women" social media campaign and make your pledge to help end this violence.

"I lift this Commitment Stick as a promise that I will live violence free and to help end violence against women, because women are sacred, givers of life, to be honoured and respected."

www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

We hope that you and your team can take the time to engage with our community and take part in our Commitment-Stick ceremony or event.

In wellness,

[name of community representative]

[Nation or Organization]



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How to Promote Your Commitment Stick Event

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

FNHA Social Media Vehicles



www.twitter.com/FNHA



www.facebook.com/firstnationshealthauthority



www.instagram.com/fnha/



Snapchat: TheFNHA

Here are some pre-made posts to share on your organization's and personal social media accounts. Feel free to create your own posts at these community events as well, and be sure to tag us if you like!

SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS



Have you heard of the “Commitment Stick” initiative, which focus on committing to end violence against Indigenous women? \$1000 is available to support any First Nations community in BC that would like to hold one! Join and share this opportunity here!

www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

It's International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women! Did you know that every First Nations community in BC is eligible for a \$1000 grant towards holding a “Commitment Stick” event or ceremony focused on committing to end this violence? Find out more here:

www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

Today is International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women -- a good day to think about what you can do to help end this all-too-prevalent violence! One good idea is to hold a community event to publicly commit to doing your part. First Nations communities in BC can receive a \$1000 grant towards holding an event or ceremony committing to help! Find a “Commitment Stick” event in your community here: www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

Join the commitment to help end violence against women! Hold your own “Commitment Stick” event or ceremony with the \$1000 that is available to every First Nations community who wants to be involved in this initiative. For more information about commitment-stick ceremonies, go to www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

What is a Commitment-Stick Ceremony? Learn more here:

www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

I'm attending a Commitment-Stick Ceremony to commit to ending violence against women! What is a Community-Stick Ceremony? Find out how you can attend or host one in your community, and how to apply for the \$1000 grant that is available to every First Nations community that wishes to hold an event or ceremony focused on ending violence against women. www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

Invite your friends to a Commitment-Stick Ceremony focused on committing to help end violence against women, here: www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

SAMPLE TWEETS (limited to 140 characters)



What are @FNHA's Commitment-Stick Ceremonies to End Violence Against Indigenous Women? Learn more here: www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

#violencestopswithme #commitmentstick

Invite your friends to @FNHA sponsored **#commitmentstick** Ceremonies Facebook event here! **#violencestopswithme** www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

I'm attending an @FNHA Commitment-Stick Ceremony to help end violence against women! www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

\$1000 is available for All First Nations communities in BC who want to hold an event focused on helping to end violence against women! To find out more www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick

#commitmentstick **#violencestopswithme**

Committing to do our part to end violence against
Indigenous women and girls.





#commitmentstick
#violencestopswithme

Committing to do our part to end violence against Indigenous women and girls.

@fnha

www.fnha.ca/commitmentstick