

Korina Barry ([00:00](#)):

A quick heads up that there are descriptions of physical and sexual abuse coming up in this episode.

Korina Barry ([00:33](#)):

Thank you everyone for tuning into the cashew podcast today. I am speaking with Linda Eagle Speaker. Linda, how are you doing?

Linda Eagle Speaker ([00:42](#)):

Oh, pretty good. All things considered during COVID.

Korina Barry ([00:46](#)):

Yeah. Could you introduce yourself, and share a little bit about yourself?

Linda Eagle Speaker ([00:51](#)):

\*Introduces self in Blackfeet language \* What I said in my language, which is Blackfeet, I'm a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy. And in my language I said, Oh gee, that means hello to your spirit. And that's not saying hi or hello. We say more than that. Our words are very expressive. So I said, I said hello all of my relations. I hold that name. I'm the seventh generation, the whole that name and the name that I carry. When you translate that name, it's Holy Medicine Shining Woman. I carry that name for this generation. I do not own that name. I just hold it in place until the next generation, a ceremonial herbalist amongst my family is going to be found and then we'll transfer the name.

Korina Barry ([02:06](#)):

Beautiful. Well, thank you. Thank you for taking some time to talk with me. You know, when I thought of that of you, I thought of how comforting and and gentle you are with everyone and everything you do. I thought of um, healing and how we take care of ourselves, you know, during how we take care of ourselves always, but especially during more difficult times like now when we're navigating this pandemic. And so, yeah. So I wanted to talk with you today a little bit about yourself and the really important work you do and the ways you teach many of us how to heal and take care of each other. And I know there is a meditation that you'd like to start us off with. Would you like to share a little bit about this meditation and then we can go right into it whenever you're ready?

Linda Eagle Speaker ([03:02](#)):

The meditation began as a Western model and uh, myself and another elder Donna LaChapelle, we indigenized the whole process. And so, um, the meditation is called soft belly and we translate that into our Ojibwe and in our Blackfeet ways. And the way of understanding is that, um, we translate that soft belly meditation into a baby's breath. We watch our babies closely when they're first born and for the first, oh, about the first three months of their lives before this little spot on the top of their head closest together, that's a strong connection to the creator and still keeps that connection. But once that begins to close, that soft spot disappears are our babies. Before that, what they'll do is they'll, they'll breathe in deeply through their nose, the hole for a moment, and then they'll exhale through their mouth and they continue that breath by learning that breath in our first born, it's their gift, it's their first gift of life. And the babies will continue to be like that until about all three months. And we as human beings, we change right about that time.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([04:33](#)):

We no longer use our mouths to breathe or exhale. We do everything through these two little holes (nose). And that's why we get so stressed because we're so busy during the day and we're doing everything we can and work in families and careers and everything else. But if you think about that breath, that's just two little places that are going in and out, in and out, and we become fearful. So in the Western way, you would say that you're either in flight or fight or you're in freeze. Um, so what I'm going to teach you is it's, I refer to it as baby's breath. We'll just do a few short, deep breaths.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([05:16](#)):

Uh, the first thing I want you to do is I just want you to get grounded in your chair. If you're sitting there, I want you to take off your glasses and put them down and then what I want you to do is just take your hands. Just put them here, right on your knees and just ever so slowly. Just gently close your eyes. Listen to my voice. Become aware of your breath, your normal breath. Let's sustain your breathing in and out. Anything that auction chant just kind of flowing as you breathe in that short breath as you breathe out again and you notice that beautiful flow and that's, that's, that's how we live. That's how we survive every moment of our day.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([06:17](#)):

But I want to teach you something that'll, that'll bring you comfort. It'll teach you to understand how stress hides in your body and how you could use your breath to just grab onto it and pull it out. I want to get five breaths, only five. But what I want you to do is we're going to take our first breath. I want you to breathe. Inhale deeply through your nose. Pause for a moment. Open your mouth slightly and just breathe. Exhale.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([07:00](#)):

Second breath. Inhale through your nose. Continue the next breath listening to my voice. When we breathe in as human beings, we are tapping that oxygen all the way. He goes to the back and goes around to the back and it just taps into this life giving nerve. That's called true Vegas nerve. So when that air comes in, it comes all the way to the back. And instinctively this goes to the front amygdala all the way to the frontal cortex, bringing that fresh air there to clean your mind out. Good thoughts. The air continues all the way down following that Vegas nerve of the wandering nerve as it wanders.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([08:11](#)):

So your lungs, your heart at air goes all the way down, travels all the way down to the very pit of your stomach. If you're doing your breathing correctly, you'll feel that air go all the way down and you'll feel your stomach kinda come out like a rubber ball. That means all the air is getting down there. And the second thing I want you to do is when you begin to breathe, I want you to think about somewhere in your body there's hurt, there's trauma, there's stiffness. On the inhale, I want you to bring your breath right, could be something on your shoulder, on your back. It could be something that's, that's hurting up here.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([09:03](#)):

Let's take that breath, take that deep breath in and bring it right to that spot in your body. Where that discomfort is, that in that pause, wrap that around that discomfort. Hold onto it tight with your breath and when we breathe out, exhale it out. Don't eat it. Shake it, let it go. Throw it on the ground. Literally just take it and just throw it. Every time you do that, every time you breathe and you bring it into your

hands at his trauma, hold it tight so it doesn't escape. Last breath, the deep breath in. Exhale, send to yourself again and yourself back. If thoughts come, let them come. Take what you need from them and put everything back on a little cloud and let it float by. It'll come back around and right now, just gently, ever so gently notice that body awareness. If you're coming back, Oop your arms a little bit, your hands move your head a little bit.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([10:45](#)):

When you're ready, they slowly begin to open your eyes. Look around. If you've got that feeling of tiredness or sleepiness at your body, sending you signals even to rest, even to um, especially in your office environment. Sometimes it's if you just sit back and turn off the screen and just do those five breaths by yourself, bring it in. Really, really, really deep are people are, are, are really skilled at hiding trauma and trauma moves. You know sometimes it's junior neck, trauma moves all the way to your bag. Trauma is like an entity that that just doesn't want to leave you. It's comfortable there as opposed to that old, old, old trauma that goes a little bit deeper that that breath work can bring it in. Your practice, this breath, you'll do it. It just instinctively, automatically I do it when I, when I sit on the edge of my bed in the morning, I'll do it mid-afternoon. I'm practice up to the point right now. Like if I, I'll do 10 breaths. Um, if I feel any stress in my body, I'll actually do 20. And they're, and they're very intense. So if your body is just naturally feeling like it's tired, that's a stick it up. Close your eyes for a moment. Close this off and just breathe.

Korina Barry ([12:30](#)):

Hmm. Thank you for that. That beautiful meditation. I'm all loosened up and Tom help others that are listening find that helpful and are able to use it as a daily practice or tool for themselves.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([12:49](#)):

A little children are especially, wow. They can really, they live in that world too though. And then us as adults, we try to live in that world that they live in. But I find when I do trainings for children, it's just phenomenal.

Korina Barry ([13:06](#)):

Well, and you know, trauma, you know, it's, it's coming up and we're talking about it and we know, um, I mean in our community and many other communities that there's historical trauma and trauma we've carried with us for centuries and there's a trauma, you know, present day trauma, active trauma still happening and that many, many people, whether they're children or adults are, they may be, um, re-experiencing trauma right now. Like maybe, um, it's being triggered or reactivated or just experiencing new trauma and during this pandemic. And, and so, um, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about that. Of course. And I know so much of your work again, is around healing and how we heal those, heal that trauma. And, and I wonder if, if you are willing to share a little bit, I know you are a survivor yourself and you have, um, personal experience when we thinking of, so for our center, um, a primary audience of ours are frontline child welfare workers or other providers who also intersect and support children and families involved with the child welfare system. And then there are others who are just interested and curious and want to know more. Um, but I wonder if you could share some of what your personal experience with trauma being a survivor and then how that maybe has impacted or led to some of your life's work that you've done and continue to do today.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([14:51](#)):

Uh, I'll, I'll begin by, uh, letting, you know, I, I just turned 65 years old. Um, most of my life I was, I was raised in Southern Alberta in Canada and if I wasn't there then I was in, um, Montana, um, where my grandmother lives, my mother's people and uh Hmm. Hmm. And I go back there some times and, um, I can let you know that, uh, on both my maternal and my paternal sides, um, our three generations. So on both sides it would be my grandmothers and my great grandmother on my mom's side, on the Montana side. So, um, they were brought, uh, so my, my great grandmother, my grandmother and my mom. And, uh, luckily for us it stopped in Montana with my mom. Um, and that's quite a while ago cause my mom passed away two years ago and she was over a hundred years old. Um, so it goes way, way, way back into the late 18 hundreds for my family. Uh, really we were, uh, indentured servants, uh, when I talk about it and even on my dad's side, uh, back in those late 18 hundreds, they would still take the children, um, and they, and they would bring them in, but they would just, uh, the farmers would come and the ranchers would come and their wives and they would line all the young ones up.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([16:25](#)):

And, um, the strong ones would be go to farmers or ranchers. Um, I'm speaking about my, my, uh, grandfather's on, on both sides. So that would be during their era. Um, so during that time they would just chosen and, uh, they were taken away. And, uh, my grandfather in Canada was about, uh, 14 years, uh, with his one family. Um, they were never paid. Uh, they were just labor. Uh, my grandmothers are usually, our grandmothers are usually chosen to be. Um, you know, I sometimes think about it, it's kind of similar to what happened to the people in the South. Uh, when the slaves was first brought over there. It's kinda similar to that, like a, except we're not paying a dollar amount for them. We're not paying anything for us. Um, and we don't get paid. Um, so that's, that's the first generation to go in on, on both sides.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([17:29](#)):

Um, and they lived many, many years and they'll tell you that, uh, my grandfather on the Mon Montana side, uh, I'm talking about 16 years, uh, then it rolls into the rolls into the next generation. Uh, that would be my mother. And my father, uh, my father went in, uh, when he was seven years old. Um, he went into and candidate was a Anglican, uh, residential boarding school. There's two, um, candidates used. The Anglicans are Catholics. Uh, so my father went in seven years old and he didn't come out until he was almost 15 when they let him go. Um, my mother went in, uh, almost 12 years. Um, she was, um, uh, fared a lot better because she was, uh, she was a matron to the, um, to the father, to the fam, the priest family that, that run the whole thing. So she fared a little better. Um, for me, uh, I have nine siblings and, uh, seven of us are survivors. Um, and it varies in different years, but we all went to the same school. Um, myself, I was five and a half and it was my turn to go. Um, I left my family and I didn't see my parents for about six years, almost six years. Um, all that time. And, uh, uh, a boarding school, um, called st Paul's, uh, Southern Alberta, you know, I survived.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([19:24](#)):

I'm here talking to you. That's what I say. I survived. I saw horrific things in there and a witness to a lot of child abuse, a lot of child sexual abuse and a lot of loneliness above anything else. It was very lonely, especially the first few years. Um, and I, and I kind of relate that to my echo work. Uh, when a mother would always ask me or she'd be angry and she'd say, you have no idea what it means to, for my child to be taken away. I wish I could tell her, but I didn't. I just supported her.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([20:11](#)):

Yeah. All those years. Um, no contact with my parents. Um, really, really segregated in there. So I never got a chance to see my brothers, males on one side and female on the other. Uh, we never really got a chance to mingle with the, we were called the juniors on the very top, intermediate sinned seniors on the bottom according to age, but we were not allowed to, um, bingo with each other, uh, be in the playground. Um, mm

Linda Eagle Speaker ([20:45](#)):

Hmm. I think just a lot of, a lot of those memories, those of those things. You know, I was a, I was a real fighter. That's a promise I made to my grandfather. Charlie, uh, told me he, he didn't, he didn't want to tell me, Hey, but my parents couldn't tell me I was going. So my grandfather did and he told me to be strong. He told me, try not to cry, cry alone by yourself and pray. Help the little ones. I never understood what he meant. I help the little ones. So little one, I'm going. But once I got there, I knew I learned fast. Really? You know, you, you didn't speak Blackfoot, so you learned English really fast. And I have my arthritis in my hands right now that I have a lot of memories where I slipped up and I, I spoke back foot. You always get it. Hey, put your hands out like this. I prefer like this better than that. And we learned not to do this broken thinkers and stuff. So we learned how to do this and we would take it like that. I went in, I went in fast and came out just as fast. Uh, just remember I had a rheumatic fever a lot. I was in there and uh, and I, I told you that I was really, really strong.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([22:36](#)):

Uh, and so in our dormitory there was a, our first year we had this beautiful, uh, sister, Angela Lake. I'll never forget her. She was so kind and gentle and she'd sneak up to our dorm and she'd bring us apples or a cookie. She would read to us. But she was there the first year and the next year she was gone. I always thought in my heart, all these years that it was because of her kindness. And then we got a, a male nurse. Um, I didn't know that, but I don't know exactly what a pedophile is. And I fought him, I fired him. But these, and a little child, I fought him. I have six documented injuries, or I was brought to the hospital. Um, I broken both collarbones and ribs and a broken leg once and broken foot. Um, just trying to stop him, you know, hiding in the dark on my bed. And as he'd go by with a little one, I, I get fierce like a bear. I jump on him and I hold onto his hair like this, going back and forth. But I'd be being carried out the door was, and then just tossed down the stairs. So that's how I sustained a lot of injuries. Interesting. Though. Now that I'm old, that I would be brought to the hospital, I'd be patched up, but I'd be brought up.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([24:14](#)):

I would tell them, don't send me back. Is this happening? So I actually, if I have all those years and I came back out, six of us little girls that went in with the 40, that was 40 of us upstairs. Six didn't make it home. And, or their mothers are still searching for five of them. Uh, one of them was located because if there was witness where she was buried, Mmm. An hour, you know, there were, there were times like we didn't have toys. She comes to my house, they have the huge collection of bears and little miniatures. Mmm. Yeah. I think that's about it for now. Hmm.

Korina Barry ([25:15](#)):

Yeah. I mean, thank you for sharing that. I imagine you have shared and been, you know, had been vulnerable in many moments and being willing to share your story and I appreciate you sharing it now. And, you know, it's hard to hear and, but I think it's important as you know, so many people still don't know that this has happened to so many of our, our people everywhere. And, and so many people don't

understand or know how that has, how would that, those experiences have passed on trauma for generations to follow. Right? And that we have, uh, parents and caregivers today, you know, that I've been in that still carried that with them. And, um, and it shows in different ways and the loss, um, the loss of culture and language at that time, you know, all of that. And, um, and how we see that manifest and show in our communities and our families today.

Korina Barry ([26:28](#)):

And we are very strong, resilient in so many ways, but that there are challenges due to that, those experiences. Um, in part, uh, you know, there were, there's much more than just the boarding school piece of it. Um, and I know when we talked before too, you shared, you know, when you first moved to Minnesota, I believe you moved right to Minneapolis. Um, you can correct me, um, that you saw, like I just remember you speaking about for, um, like urban Indian communities sometimes. Um, and for sometimes families in urban areas, there is even more so a loss of sometimes culture language ceremony because of geography and because our, our tribal communities are Northern, you know, in different, we're away from, we're off that land. Um, but you, you had shared that you saw some of that in, in families when you first moved here and you were beginning starting your work here in the child welfare kind of child protection area. Um, I don't know if you want to share a little bit about the work that you had been doing and kind of how, what your work with child protection that the system has looked like too.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([27:45](#)):

I think that, uh, you're referring to a conversation that we had about when we first began this, this project and, um, you know, coming from the reservation and, um, relearning my language thing, thank goodness because of my parents and, um, because of the fact that they actually sent us away. We came home for only seven days, but, uh, we, we, we never went into the house and we were really, really lucky to have my black feet, uh, family. So my great grandmother and my grandmother came for us on the seventh day and that was our salvation. We went way outside of cross the border to Browning and 28 miles out there, rarely came to town. That's why I learned that, uh, all those things again about medicines, but you know, and I, when I arrived here, all but 15 years ago and half now, my, uh, my first job as a social worker was intensive in home.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([28:55](#)):

Um, when I was assigned 12 families. And I literally went into shock. I couldn't believe the dysfunction of the home of the, there was no family unit. Everybody was just there, kind of surviving a minute by minute, hour by hour. And, uh, I'm trying to do an intake and I'm asking, what is your tribe and what we're kind of guessing. Uh, someone told me my grandmother was from here, or relatives told me that they were from here. Uh, so that tells me you're not enrolled if you're not an old in your tribe. And there's so much disconnection. And so what found, and I went back to my supervisor, Lorraine white at the time, and I, and I asked her, uh, she said, help them, help them to find themselves. So I would have to say for that first three months was, uh, just that tribal identification, finding out who your tribe is.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([29:58](#)):

So connecting all of my families to who they are to their reservation, to their people. Because once you find all that, then you begin to find out what our customs, what our traditions, what our ceremonies. I'm an a month from a day when ultra my people, um, I'm not a whole, I'm a, each one of us having individual ceremony. So I think this, they just felt so lost and deflated when I first went in. And, um, what

was really, really shocking to my ear was, um, the disrespect between the young children, the young ones and the elders. There was none. I, I remember distinctly a young girl, um, she lived with her grandma and her mom. And I, uh, was waiting to speak with her just to do an intake and I just remember she walked in and she was all dressed in red and white. And, um, she walked back and she threw her bag down and she looked at her mom and ordered her around to the kitchen. And then she looked at me and she said, uh, what are you doing here beyond, I don't even know. That was the cusp word apparently. So I never gave up on her. Never, never when she would call me and give me a hard time to pick her up at school, I'm there. Never gave up on that girl about, uh, two years ago I get a call on the phone, grandma, it's me. I'm complicating. I'm graduating from Augsburg. Can you be there grandma? Oh no, I made it. If you're just standing here, you never gave up on me. I can tell you that all those 12 families, none of them went into child protection. So that's, that's just what I wanted to do.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([32:07](#)):

I, I, that was my next career was to go full throttle and accepted, uh, our position for eco collaborative coordinator. My family caseload was like about 30 fab, jumped from 12 all the way up automatically to 30. So I, uh, I was a different different coordinator completely when I would, uh, I communicate with the investigators. I knew them really well. Y'all still know me. Um, no faxing me the chicks. But what I would do is I would, I would look at the chips and I would highlight the address and telephone number and family and I would make a call. Hmm. I'm coming over to visit you. I want your family there. I want your grandmas. I want your aunties that are loud. I want all of them that are there to support you. And I like tea by the way. I'm coming over and we would come over and we'd brainstorm what just happened. Hmm. Maybe the young couple sitting there, okay. Kids are out of the home. Make sure they're there, both of them. But the number one question I'd always ask, maybe the third question I want to know right now. I want all the aunties and the grandmas and everybody that's in this room, brothers, sisters, cousins, everybody that's here. I want you to rate their chemical dependency. One being the least and 10 being the most severe. And be honest, I did that so much that after a while I made cards from one to 10 and they would just hold up the card. But in most cases it would always be 10 pen, pen, pen, pen. Who better to know the chemical dependency in her own family, who better to help them. And so then we begin who's going to go to court with us? Who's going to get ahold of kinship and let them know that there's all these families that can didn't help out who's going to do transport and she or he needs to get to groups and all of that. We're going to do this as a family and we're going to get those kids back. But that's, that's some of the things that I, I, you know, it's just always comes back to our people that comes back to that, you know, that disconnect of, of that missing identity.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([34:47](#)):

Yeah. Unique. We are unique human beings here and indigenous to this continent and we need to hold onto that with, with great pride for our children and fight for them as much as we can. But at the same time too, we are all human beings. And so when I, I'd go down to court, I would, I beat the child protection workers, child service workers, the judges, all of that. Y'all, all of them knew me. But I remember my very first court hearing I went to and I, I walked in with the mom and everybody was in a little huddle, but she sat over here. We're making these decisions for her, for her kids, for this and that. And she would just sit there. So I remember I got up and I went over there and introduced myself and uh, I said, I hear all of this noise about, she's this and she's that. And she's everything. She's going to fail, she's going to do this. We have to overwork our stuff. All of that. Do you realize that you're talking about her and she can hear you. She's a human being. You helped me and will help. I want you to bring this a little bit over here closer.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([36:15](#)):

I think one of the last things that I was really successful was introduced to um, a meeting, a family meeting that happens after the court hearing style. And that started off with the very beginnings, like what just happened and now it's taken place by the family group conferencing people that come down. And I'm, I love that. I love that where they go in and okay now what happened, who can do what they love all of that. So I think all my experiences, my surviving, everything that I did and coming through all of this has helped me to understand what is child abuse when they talk about it. What does child sexual abuse? A little one who has been sexually abused, but we need to hold and help the whole new kid or family. Cause we know that those are learned behaviors. He just didn't, he wasn't born a sex offender. It could be immediate family, could be a brother amongst the family. He wasn't born like that and made like that. Getting the family to understand. And being able to help all of that.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([37:36](#)):

But at the same time too, no being strong enough to support when called upon in really severe cases where I support termination of parental rights and then with the tribe suspension of parental rights. If a child is for me when a little child is beaten half to you know, skin of his life, another one doesn't need to go back there, no matter how much you train that person. And then if a little child is in your home and you know, only know that little one has been sexually abused and it goes on without being reported. I'm going to do everything in my power as a mother and a grandmother to remove that little child. And sometimes we have to do that and we have to support the tribe and we have to support the, and we have to support germination, which comes along with that big trial situation, but understand many, many times over my career.

Korina Barry ([38:47](#)):

So I wonder as we've talked about trauma, we've talked about historical trauma and how that does carried on and many are still carrying that with them today. How there's new traumas that, um, parents and caregivers are experiencing that children have experienced. And then we're in a pandemic, right, where this is a whole nother kind of trauma, um, for many, or there may be things happening in families that are triggering past traumas and all of that. And so I wonder if you have any thoughts or if you're supporting other kind of, you know, um, frontline providers through your work on how to best support families right now and like even the smallest way, you know, like what does that engagement look like when we're virtually, um, interviewing kids about potential abuse or alleged abuse or if it's like supporting a parent and a child visitation via zoom, if that's even a possibility for that family or, um, you know, um, collaborating and connecting with community providers during this time to best support families. Um, you know, I don't know if you have any thoughts of just like, how do we, how do we continue to support families right now and what does that engagement look like? And remember and being gentle and kind and um, mindful of where people are at and what they've been through and what they're experiencing right now.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([40:29](#)):

You know, I came home but I, I immediately knew that as soon as I started getting in calls from our agency alone cause we were going through transition, which we still are, but I'm from the family, home workers and echo workers and how can we continue our work and, and what can we do that we can help our families. And that was also coming in not only from my agency but also from American Indian family center and their youth groups. Uh, work closely with them. Uh, also over there at indigenous peoples taskforce. Worked closely with those, the youth group. You're kidding when players and uh, do



a lot of mind body medicine with them also too. And also too, I do a lot of work with the DIW uh, youth group. So we were kind of, um, between those three agencies and, and, and here being, um, on a virtual world, how can I, how can I help the children?

Linda Eagle Speaker ([41:33](#)):

And for me it was going back to what I was taught as a child medicine prayer. Uh, so what I did is I sat down early morning and I, and I prayed and I, uh, made offering and how can I help these children? In what way can I help these children? Cause they're different ages and some are in care and some aren't in care and some are just with their families and some of them are good homes and some aren't in good homes. And so with that power of prayer, one of the things I did is I went back to my office and I collected all of my medicines. Um, I collected all of my say to my sweet grass, uh, I make traditional tobacco, um, and, and Cedar. And so what I did is I came home and I began to make, uh, prayer kits.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([42:30](#)):

And it's just a prayer kit, just, uh, and all it is is very, very simple. It just has, that's a plastic bag. It has the, it has Sage and it has flat Cedar. It has a traditional tobacco and also sweet grass. And I even put in there some little box stick matches. And then I also, um, whatever program it's going to go to. Um, I also put on a, um, two page thing on what is prayer? What is prayer? Prayer, silent prayers through your eyes, para. You can just stand there and be quiet. You don't need to be loud or on a big huge speaker and, and you can pray to yourself. So it's individuals. Um, we're going through this on our own. And so when we, we teach them to open up the kit, we teach them to take this age and smudge with it.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([43:36](#)):

And what does grandma's age and where's it coming from? We take grandma's Cedar out, we take grandma sweet grass and take a grandma tobacco right there. And we teach them what this means. So when you're out there and you're feeling really bad, maybe you're on a walk. Open this up. So fragrant people have are, we've been making tobacco for thousands of years and you just worries, let it put that worry in that tobacco and let it go on the wind. Even with your walking out through children. But it teaches them to pray. And then I made these, uh, these are what they call for direction Thai kids. And it's, it's, it contains, it's uh, it's to teach diversity. It's teach about culture and all really.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([44:41](#)):

If we say that, uh, we teach our children the four directions, do we really do we teach them that each one of these colors in here, yellow represents all the two cultures of the world. Mom, Japanese, all of them black, representing all the black cultures of the world. White represents all European cultures of the world that came across to find us. Red represents all indigenous people in this continent and, uh, another continent. But what you do is you, you teach them that the significance of the cultures and that we are, we are equal to each other, no greater than each other. And that's one of the lessons that we teach. So I'm going to be doing this for the MIWRC learning center.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([45:47](#)):

Uh, we're going to do a series of, uh, 10 videos, but it won't be just myself. The first two will be me, uh, but we want to do a video is also to an hour long video of, um, other healers in the community and their work too. Um, that'll be on the, uh, loaded onto our site and accessible to everybody. And that's the Minnesota Indian women's resource center website, right? Yeah. Okay. Yep. Oh, that's wonderful. You know, and in to, um, I don't know if you have already worked on projects that are available on this or if

you have recommendations that we could also link to just around, um, our medicines. You know, I know you do so much around medicines and harvesting and healing with medicines and our traditional medicines. And I think of, you know, there are many folks that don't know how to do that, where to start.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([46:39](#)):

Um, or what that even means. And especially for an urban area, sometimes we don't, we don't know where to go pick, you know, where to gather Cedar and what's maybe the appropriate way to do that. And so if you have any suggestions or if you have any existing resources around kind of some of the medicines we can gather here locally and taking care of ourselves that we could share, um, that, that feels okay to you. You know, that we could do that too.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([47:06](#)):

Yesterday afternoon I was, I was, uh, uh, pinned in, Hey, um, so my husband and I, we took a drive up on 35 w and then I reported back to everybody, all the herbalists and everyone that, uh, Sage is about that high around Stacey and Wyoming. Uh, as you get a little bit closer to Hugo and you're dreaming how that it gets about to maybe two inches. So I'm just reporting that out to all the herbalists. And they were also sending me messages about, um, they wanted to find certain, certain medicines and if you find this, uh, can you get me stop? Uh, we always help each other out when we're out there, uh, forging. Hey. So I was able to go out there and I was able to let all the different herbalists know that we're about a month out, uh, on actually Sage really, really coming forward.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([48:00](#)):

Hey, so what I, what I do for like at our, at our agency, um, just getting ready to start a new project, it was just a little mini grant and it was a, what they call a growth shed grant. Hey, I love that. I love that. And it's actually a gross shed on wheels that's built for you. It's, it's hydroponic. Um, and that's something I want to, uh, I'm gonna, I'm mentoring, um, two of our younger ones in our program to take that on and we know we'll be there in a background for different stuff. Uh, but I want you to take the lead and then I'm going to incorporate that and, and bringing in, um, the gardeners from Indigenous Peoples Task Force and there's two that are, are really specialized in hydroponics. So that's the future for our young ones say. So we'll give that staff the opportunity to do that. We'll, we'll collaborate with the Indigenous People's Task Force. We're going to use as a teaching tool for our programs and our young girls and our youth. Um, it's going to be for our garden warriors upstairs that live in our apartments so that they can come down a, so really being inventive with the different grants.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([49:17](#)):

Um, I think the newest grant that I'm so, so proud to be able to receive that grant, uh, healers from all over Minnesota and that area. And I know that there's five urban, uh, urban agencies that have, that have been offered this grant traditional healer grant, uh, first of its kind. And that's thanks to Governor Walz and our Lieutenant governor recognizing our abilities for the very first time and really, really being paid for what we actually do rather than being paid by this grant, that grant restrictions. And I'm really looking forward to that. That's going to begin in June. So I'm mentoring that and I love that part of the grant that, um, I'm going to reach that point. I'm 65, so maybe a good another five years out of me, but uh, that grant will give me an opportunity to mentor. And I've selected a young lady that's just phenomenal in the community.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([50:20](#)):

Uh, she worked in our treatment program and her name is Sheila and she is a Sundancer so um, I'll be teaching her about the different medicines and a little bit more detail. So she accepted, she accepted, uh, quite proud that we're going to be working together, have another young lady. Uh, she's just coming through our programs and she's uh, in a lot of ways of survivor herself. She will be the one that's going to be instrumental in leading for the growth shit. At first he was really, really scared and I said, no, no, you, you were rescued anywhere by the County and they found you and they brought you to your grandma and your grandma, your grandma's best friend. Next door was a medicine woman. That's why you learned all of that. Don't hide it. So it has all this opportunities there to be able to, that's our responsibilities of elders is to pass these things on and not hold on to all of them.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([51:27](#)):

A so I'm really looking forward to this grant. I'm just working on the last little bits of this and this and that. Um, a lot of our agencies, because of this grant, we're going to be able to take care of our sacred items that we haven't been able to like cleaning up our agency staff and having that done. If we have drums, getting them rattles, all of that, uh, as well. There's going to be a dollars in there. So I'll be able to bring in elders from other agencies and other ones from that. We haven't been able to, you want to bring somebody down from Canada to, I like that. I'm really looking forward to that.

Korina Barry ([52:06](#)):

That's really exciting. And for people who maybe aren't clear too is that this grant is really allowing and finally opening it up from what you're saying, the opportunity to use our traditional ways and ways of healing and our medicines as, as healing. You know, like in, in practice, in these programs and not just the westernized, you know, forms of treatment and supporting mental health and chemical dependency and that there's actually some, some recognition and actual financial support to do that healing work.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([52:41](#)):

Yeah. I'll be bringing in, uh, like I always do, uh, every season, starting in June, um, I bring out the women from the treatment program. Um, I have special permission to bring them out their bag, lunch and, um, and I also bring out the women from the healing journeys program. And, uh, while I'm out there, you know, we meet them where they're at, make no judgements except them the way that they are can change another human being, but we can help them. And I remember last year when I brought out healing journeys and some of them were scared cause they, they hear so many misconceptions about, you know, I'm this way or that way, so I can't stage and Oh, that's when you need it the most. Uh, what I do with mine, I'll bring every 10 ladies out there and go way out there. And we, I teach them what, what we're going to do, but I always make sure that I give them a round ball of sage, a big one, and then I ask them. I tell them, when you're out there and things come to you and your memories, somebody had hurt you, maybe somebody talk to or somebody is in your life that's you're having a hard time with. I don't want you to stop picking stage. I want you to take this while you're picking and you hold it.

Linda Eagle Speaker ([54:14](#)):

Whenever you feel something coming on that's so strong, I want you to stand up. I want you to hold that sage and I want you to move it up towards the creator and I'll see you from afar. I'll know that you know how to pray now. You know how to ask for help for that. Sage - help me, help me. Grandfather's help me. And it's so amazing that I'll be watching everybody in the field and every now and then a

woman will stand up and she doesn't look for help this way or that way. She knows she can help herself. She knows that and she'll raise her hand. We don't need to rush to her. She knows she needs to be able to breathe through it, which we've already taught her. And then her hand, I'll go down and she'll go back to picking. We usually pick about four hours a nice lunch while we're out there and teach them about other medicines too. So I do that for both adults and kids.

Korina Barry ([55:28](#)):

Thank you so much Linda. I really appreciate your time and, and being able to, to see you. You know, I know our listeners can't see you, but it's so good to talk to you today and just here, you know, just a little bit of your wisdom, your knowledge, your experience, and I really, really appreciate you being willing to share a little bit of your, your life experience. It's, it's tough and you're a survivor and, and we're so thankful to have you in community. Thank you.

Korina Barry ([56:00](#)):

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