

## **PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION – ACCESSING ELDERS**

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Elders play important roles in traditional cultures, as advisors, mediators, mentors, and knowledge keepers. They are an important partner for effective programming. The following advice was written for youth who are approaching Elders, but it contains helpful advice for both youth and adults wishing to access this valuable community resource. It is reprinted with permission from the *NWAC Violence Prevention Toolkit* (see case study starting on page 40).

### **TOOL**

#### **HOW TO APPROACH AN ELDER**

Whereas different communities have their own unique ways of approaching their Elders and incorporating traditional teachings, the following is some general advice provided by Elder Irene Lindsay who was helping the young women of NWAC's Youth Council on their journey in developing the Violence Prevention Toolkit for Aboriginal girls.

- 1) Bring a pouch of tobacco or a little rock to an Elder as a way to approach them
- 2) Ask if they can meet with you
- 3) Consider Elders as alternatives to other options
- 4) Think about the ways in which an Elder can help
- 5) Give Elders respect and time
- 6) Elders can introduce you to traditional aspects - ask the Elder about traditional ways of dealing with the problem
- 7) Understand the value of Elders in your culture and your community
- 8) There are some things out there - there is an Aboriginal community you should be proud of
- 9) Don't forget - TRADITIONAL APPROACH WORKS!

*For a more in-depth guide, see Interviewing Elders: Guidelines from the National Aboriginal Health Organization at <http://www.naho.ca/english/documents/InterviewingElders--FINAL.pdf>.*