Common Cultural Beliefs

Many Native American beliefs are deeply rooted in their cultures with the belief that everything is sacred. A lesson can be found in all things and experiences and everything has a purpose. Love, honor and respect create the foundation of Native spirituality. Not only do Native Americans love, honor, and respect the Creator and Mother Earth, but also every living thing. Native American culture is about being in touch with oneself and everything around one. They are taught that every person has a role in the tribal community. In Native American culture it is common to believe that elders hold the answers and keep Native American culture alive. Many Native Americans believe that they have much to learn from their elders who are often honored and revered in Native American culture.

Facts

- There are nine Tribal Nations in New York State.
- Native Americans live throughout New York State in cities, towns, and villages.
- Native Americans have strong cultural ties to their nation/tribes.
- Native American tribes or Indian Nation governments determine who can be members of the tribe/nation.
- The Iroquois nations/tribes (Cayuga, Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca & Tuscarora) of New York State traditionally lived in longhouses.
- The Algonquin nations/tribes (Unkechaug & Shinnecock) of New York State traditionally lived in wigwams.
- Most of New York’s Indian population does not live on reservations.

New York State Native American Population

- New York City has the largest Urban Native American population in the country.
- Approximately 70 percent of the Native American population lives off reservation land.

Words you might have heard about Native American heritage could be "Iroquois" or "Algonquin" which represent groups of tribes in New York State today.

Over 200,000 New York residents identify themselves as American Indian/Alaska Native alone or in some combination with another race.
If you are Native American, you could be eligible for benefits like...

- Education: You may be eligible for scholarships, grants, and financial support.
- Health: You may be entitled to medical, dental, and vision care.
- Other tribal benefits: Each tribe/nation has different benefits for its members.

This pamphlet has been designed to help Native American youth in care. It may help you determine if you are Native American and why it is important that you know.

For more information contact: United National Indian Tribal Youth Center for Native American Youth www.covry.org/home.html

For more Youth in Care resources, visit: www.YouthInCare.org

Who is an "Indian Child"?

For special protections under the Indian Child Welfare Act an Indian Child shall mean any unmarried person who is under the age of 18, or is a married person who is the biological child of a member of an Indian nation or tribe and is residing on or is domiciled within an Indian reservation.

For more information contact: Bureau of Indian Affairs

New York State Office of Children & Family Services

Are you a Native American Youth in Care?

If you or do you know someone who is Native American?

OCFS Native American Services (716) 847-3123

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Who do you contact to find out?

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