

Recommendations for honoring Indigenous spirituality, influences, and frameworks within the New Warrior Training Adventure

By the Cultural Appropriation Taskforce within MKP Northern California

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With support from the Northern California Leaderbody of The Mankind Project

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“No people come into possession of a culture without having paid a heavy price for it.” — James Baldwin

“...fetishization of Native American spirituality not only masks the social oppression of real Indian people but also perpetuates it...” - from “Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality” by Lisa Aldred

Contextual Statement

For many years, in various communities throughout The Mankind Project (MKP), men have expressed concerns in and around the ways in which MKP incorporates Indigenous rituals, language, and spirituality during New Warrior Training Adventures (NWTAs).

As The ManKind Project turns 35 years old in April 2020, it seems only timely and congruent that a thorough and comprehensive review of the NWTAs and specifically all related protocols is undertaken with a specific focus on any issues and/or incidents of Cultural Appropriation. While we appreciate the good intentions and great value this training has provided to almost 80,000 men around the world, it is time to express our Recognition, Respect, and Gratitude to the Indigenous Cultures from which we've taken so much.

The Mankind Project engages in cultural appropriation when the use and presentation of Indigenous rituals, language, knowledge, and spirituality is not properly acknowledged. To be fully in integrity, MKP must publicly offer recognition, respect, and gratitude for the Indigenous traditions that those involved in MKP have benefited and have learned from.

In mid 2019, the Northern California leader body established the Cultural Appropriation Taskforce to investigate and present recommendations for how to better include and acknowledge components of Native American traditions within MKP. Taskforce members had discussions with many leaders, co-leaders and elders

throughout MKP and members of the Lodge Keeper Society (LKS) to develop the recommendations in this document.

The Mankind Project prides itself on being an organization dedicated to inclusion and multicultural awareness. The intention of this report is to bring MKP into more alignment with these values by adjusting protocols and organizational practices, to better respect the indigenous teachings that have contributed to the design of the NWTa - which are improving the lives of thousands of men. Our goal is to see MKP include relevant Indigenous teachings while clearly honoring the origins of these traditions.

Thus, we are strongly recommending the following changes be made to the NWTa and within MKP. We present these recommendations in two phases:

1. **Essential:** Urgent changes that should be incorporated into the 2020 NWTa protocols.
2. **Next Steps:** Systemic and cultural changes throughout MKP to take effect over the next 3-5 years.

Essential Recommendations

To get a better understanding for why this taskforce opted to rewrite certain protocols, see the sections marked 'Context:' in the following document: [In Depth Recommendations for MKP NWTa Protocols](#)

Here are rewrites of various protocols and staff processes corresponding chronologically.

1. [Overall observations of cultural appropriation on the NWTa.](#)
2. [Rewrite: Axis Mundi](#)
3. [New Protocol: Honoring Sacred Teachings](#)
4. [Rewrite: Context Presentation](#)
5. [Rewrite: Guides & Allies \(formerly Animal Names\)](#)
6. [Rewrite: Talisman Making](#)
7. [Rewrite: Talisman Ceremony](#)
8. [Rewrite: Morning Circle](#)
9. [Recommendation to LKSI - Context regarding the P&R Ceremony](#)

Next Steps

After completing updates to the NWTa protocols, our goal is to help MKP apply the same principles of recognition, respect, and gratitude throughout the other layers of the organization. Here are the areas within MKP where we believe this might be especially important.

1. From the MKP USA level to write a statement of truth and reconciliation.
2. IGroups: provide IGroups more background on Native American teachings that are commonly used.
3. LKSI: Update/improve the information that participants are given about the origins of the P&RC.
4. MKP USA: Strengthen the partnership with the Indigenous nations.

Resources and References

Article 11 of The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) **[The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)**

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, protect and develop manifestations of their cultures, such as artefacts, designs, ceremonies, and technologies. States shall provide redress with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs. *(This is the legal basis for any potential lawsuit around Cultural Appropriation)*

Section from the [1993 Lakota Declaration of War Against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality](#)

"...individuals and groups involved in the "New Age Movement," in the "men's movement," in "neo-paganism" cults and in "shamanism" workshops all have exploited the spiritual traditions of our Lakota people by imitating our ceremonial ways and by mixing such imitation rituals with non-Indian occult practices in an offensive and harmful pseudo-religious hodge-podge..."

[Bill C-15 - An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

[Think Before You appropriate](#)

[The Truth About the Wounded Knee Massacre](#) by Patti Jo King

[The danger of a single story | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie](#)

[What Does It Mean to Decolonize your Mind?](#)

[Unsettling America: Decolonization in Practice](#)

[Ted Talk: America's native prisoners of war](#)

[White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men, Part 1 of 3](#)

[Is Nothing Sacred](#) by Nabeelah Jaffer aeon.co

Christopher Ronwanièn:te Jocks. (1996). [Spirituality for Sale: Sacred Knowledge in the Consumer Age](#). *American Indian Quarterly*, 20(3/4), 415-431. doi:10.2307/1185785

Aldred, Lisa. "[Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality](#)." *The American Indian Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (2000): 329-352. doi:10.1353/aiq.2000.0001.

[The Violence of Forgetting](#) — By Brad Evans and Henry A. Giroux