



Indigenous Healing Rituals as Emotional Playgrounds



About Ritual

Ritual = an intended pattern of actions that is repeated for a purpose other than the actions themselves

- A ceremony is a ritual that is performed on a certain occasion
- Can characterize a culture or religion
- Can protect the important from the urgent
- Volition is suspended (eg, agency, intention, will) during the duration of the ritual

Ritual as an emotional playground

Rituals and the seven properties of play:

PARAMETERS – rituals have clear beginnings and endings

ENGAGING – rituals can only ‘work’ to the degree that the participant is fully engaged

FREEDOM – ritual must be freely entered although volition is suspended within the ritual

EXPRESSION – rituals would seem ideally suited to facilitate emotional expression or enable the recovery of feelings

SAFE – ritual can allow for emotional expression that would otherwise be alienating or inappropriate

Ritual as an emotional playground

Rituals and the seven properties of play

NOT WORK – Rituals do the work – participants are meant to REST from their work. The work of attachment and volition are suspended. Participants do not need to know the purpose of the work for it to be effective.

NOT for REAL – ie, ritual is to be differentiated from everyday reality, from the mundane or trivial, from the 'seen' or empirical world, from the purely physical versus metaphysical world, from the material (versus emotional or spiritual) world, from the temporal world with its consciousness of time.