

Funerals in First Nations during COVID-19

Updated
Dec2020

With COVID-19, it makes it especially difficult to go through the grieving process and plan funerals while considering the health and safety of others. We can still find ways to remember our loved ones and pay our respects while we protect ourselves, our families and other community members.

We need to follow the health measures as our situation evolves. It is important to consider and limit the number of people for gatherings, this includes funeral services. At the Critical level we are currently in, gatherings of people including funerals is limited to 5. When working with funeral services providers and those involved in services and ceremonies, have conversations about following public health orders and safely planning for the funeral. Here are some examples you could include:

- **Plan for a smaller service/ceremony for immediate family now and plan for a public memorial service later when it is safer.**
- **Have signage and/or verbal directions on safety measures such as using hand sanitizer and putting on mask upon entry and physical distancing for indoor/outdoor portion of funeral.**
- **Reduce need for people to touch items that are typically touched at funerals. Example: a pen for guest book.**
- **Keep physical distancing practices in place for funeral.**
- **If refreshments and food are provided, have them be served or pre-plated. (Again, reducing repeated touching of items for example: cups, creamer, sugar spoons, serving utensils, etc.).**
- **Ensure areas like podiums have hand sanitizer and wipes so the mic can be wiped after each speaker.**
- **Let people know in advance that you will have someone identified and assigned to broadcast the wake/funeral service on Facebook Live so extended family and friends can "virtually attend." You can ask funeral director if they do anything virtually for funerals.**
- **Find ways to support the grieving family with online memorials where people can share stories, photos, memories, prayers, songs and other ways to remember the loved one and support the grieving family.**
- **Broadcast the wake and or funeral service on Community Radio or TV.**



Assembly of
Manitoba Chiefs



Manitoba
Keewatinowik
Okimakinak



First Nations Health
and Social Secretariat
of Manitoba



Keewatinohk
Inniniw
Minoayawin