

# CHOOSE LIFE NEWSLETTER



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Aski Nation  
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Our team acknowledges that NAN communities have varying dialects, languages, and cultural teachings. Teachings vary from First Nation to First Nation and even from one geographic region to another. For more information, please consult with a Traditional Elder, Healer or Medicine Person. With respect to this, our newsletter will do our best to be inclusive to both Ojibwe, Ojicree, and Cree teachings that are shared. Please share any teachings that you are comfortable sharing and it will be included in our newsletter.

## AUGUST: BLACKBERRY MOON

### DATKAAGMIN GIIZIS

The eighth moon of Creation is Thimbleberry Moon (Blackberry Moon), when we honour the blackberry which produces an abundance of fruit once every three years. It was one of the first plants put on Mother Earth, and its purpose is to protect the Sacred Circle of life by allowing us to recognize and understand the teachings that come from the Spirit World. The eighth moon can fall in either July or August, depending on the year. Other names for this moon are Thimbleberry Moon.



## AUGUST: CORN MOON

### MDAAMIIN GIIZIS

The ninth moon of Creation is the Corn Moon, during which time we learn about the cycle of life. Each cob of corn has thirteen rows of multicoloured seeds which represent all the spirits waiting to begin their Earth Walk. These will be the future generations for whom we must prepare.

## THIRTEEN MOON TEACHINGS

The cycles of the moon determine our yearly calendar. The changes that come with each passing moon indicate the times for planting, harvesting, hunting and gathering. In the Anishnawbe calendar the names of each month includes the word 'moon' and reflects the close connection between the cycles of the moon and the plant and animal life on Turtle Island.

**To learn more visit:** <https://www.onwa.ca/full-moon-ceremony>

### DO YOU HAVE A CULTURAL AND/OR LAND BASED COORDINATOR?

The Choose Life Cultural Coordinator is looking to connect with all of the Choose Life Cultural & Land-Based Coordinators. Please scan the QR code with your phone to fill out this form on their behalf or forward the newsletter to them. Or you can email [kdrake@nan.ca](mailto:kdrake@nan.ca) to request a link to access the form.



## GRANDMOTHER MOON

It is said that Grandmother Moon watches over the waters of the Earth. We see this in her regulating of the tides. Grandmother Moon controls all female life. Much of the water life spawn according to the cycles of the moon. It is said that Grandmother Moon is especially close to women because she governs the woman's cleansing cycle, the natural cycle of menstruation known as the moon time. Just as Grandmother Moon watches over the waters of the Earth, it is said that women watch over the waters of the people. Water always comes before new life.

## MOONTIME TEACHINGS

It is said that the moon cycle is a gift to women. It is a time to cleanse herself mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. The moon time is considered a time of power, second only to the ability of the Great Spirit to give life. That is how strong that power is. Women can ask Grandmother Moon for direction in life, for wisdom, and for help for her children and others. Grandmother Moon can give her healing and balancing energy to women. Some teachings say that when women are on their moon time, the Creator comes closer to them. When women are on their moon time, their power is at its strongest and this is acknowledged in that they do not prepare foods or medicines, take part in ceremonies or use the pipes and other sacred items. The moon time is a ceremony of life for women and a time for renewal. The moon time is the time for women to relax and take it easy. All the chores are done by other family members. It is a time for women to think about themselves, their families, their relatives or anyone they think needs help. It is a time of reflection.

## TEACHINGS ON THE MOONTIME

In the past, when a young woman had her first moon time her aunts or grandmothers would take her to a small lodge where she would be close to the natural world. The young woman is sacred at that time. She is now able to give life. She would be given the teachings about her new life from her mother, grandmothers or aunts. She would be taught about her role as a woman in the community.





# ASIST APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING

The ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) program is a training course designed to help people provide immediate and effective support to individuals who may be at risk of suicide. It aims to equip participants with the skills and confidence needed to intervene and prevent suicide.

During ASIST, participants learn how to recognize the signs that someone might be thinking about suicide. They also learn how to talk openly and honestly with the person at risk, offering empathy and understanding. The program emphasizes the importance of creating a safe and non-judgmental environment, where the individual feels comfortable discussing their feelings.

ASIST teaches a practical step-by-step intervention process known as the "Pathway for Assisting Life" that includes:

- **Connect:** Building a connection with the person at risk, showing that you care and are there to support them.
- **Understand:** Listening to their thoughts and feelings without judgment to understand their perspective.
- **Assist:** Collaborating with the person to explore options and make a plan to stay safe.
- **Follow-up:** Making sure the person stays safe and continues to receive support after the intervention.

The ASIST program is usually conducted in a two-day workshop format and involves interactive discussions, simulations, and role-plays to practice the skills learned. The goal is to empower participants to be ready and willing to intervene if they encounter someone in crisis.

ASIST is widely used by various organizations, communities, and professionals, including mental health workers, teachers, police officers, and community members. The program has proven to be effective in increasing participants' confidence and ability to help someone at risk of suicide, ultimately saving lives.

Remember, if you encounter someone who may be at risk of suicide, always take the situation seriously and seek professional help or support immediately. ASIST training can be valuable in providing the knowledge and skills needed to offer that initial support until professional help can be obtained.

## NAN COMMUNITY WELLNESS TRAINING TEAM

If you are interested in accessing this type of training, please reach out to the NAN Community Wellness Team to inquire about their services. Below is a list of the types of training their team can provide:

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

Mental Health First Aid-First Nations

Verbal Intervention

Critical Incident Group Debriefing

Crisis Response Planning

Naloxone & Drug Overdose Awareness Training

Self & Community Care Training

For questions and inquiries, please email:

[training@nancrisisteam.ca](mailto:training@nancrisisteam.ca)



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### CHOOSE LIFE NETWORKING CALLS

Please join our team once a month on Microsoft Teams to stay connected with one another!

**WHEN:** Every 2nd Wednesday of the month

AUGUST 9 | SEPTEMBER 13  
OCTOBER 11 | NOVEMBER 8 | DECEMBER 13

**TIME:** Log in @ 10:45AM EST  
Starts @ 11:00AM EST

There will be **attendance prizes!**

## APPLICATIONS & REPORTING

The deadline for 2023-2024 Choose Life Applications is July 31st, 2023. Any applications submitted after this date may get pro-rated and financials will be required for any programming held between April 2023 and up to the date application was submitted.

Reporting for 2022-2023 is due by July 29th, 2023. If reports are not submitted by this date, please contact Allan Turtle and Shannon Furioso for support if needed. Also, please reach out to Hannah Caruana at Indigenous Services Canada if you cannot submit your reporting by this date. She can provide more direction on next steps. Her email is [Hannah.caruana@sac-isc.gc.ca](mailto:Hannah.caruana@sac-isc.gc.ca)

## SUPPORTS & RESOURCES

### NAN Hope

Call 1 844 NAN HOPE (626-4673) | [www.nanhope.ca](http://www.nanhope.ca)

### Hope for Wellness Help Line

Call 1-855-242-3310 | [www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca)

### Talk4Healing

Call 1-855-554-HEAL (4325) | [www.talk4healing.com](http://www.talk4healing.com)

### Kids Help Phone

Call 1-800-668-6868 | Text 686868 | [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

### CMHA Crisis Response

Call Thunder Bay: 807-346-8282

District/Toll-Free: 1-888-269-3100

Northwest Region: 1-866-888-8988

[www.thunderbay.cmha.ca](http://www.thunderbay.cmha.ca)

### Crisis Services Canada

Call 1-833-456-4566 | Text 45645 | [www.crisisservicescanada.ca](http://www.crisisservicescanada.ca)

## REFERENCES

<https://mushkiki.com/our-programs/moontime-and-grandmother-moon/>  
<https://www.onwa.ca/full-moon-ceremony>  
<http://muskratmagazine.com/ojibwe-moons/>  
<https://mushkiki.com/our-programs/moontime-and-grandmother-moon/>  
<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=ASIST&form=HDRSC4&first=1>

## NAN CHOOSE LIFE TEAM

**NAN Director of Social Services**  
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**NAN Director of Social Services**  
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**NAN Choose Life Coordinator**  
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**NAN Choose Life Cultural Coordinator**  
Kiaya Drake, [kdrake@nan.ca](mailto:kdrake@nan.ca)

**NAN Choose Life Summer Student**  
Lael Rae, [lrae@nan.ca](mailto:lrae@nan.ca)

NAN Choose Life welcomes new staff and wishes those who have left the Choose Life Team many thanks for their role in Choose Life and well wishes as they journey forward.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Has your team had any recent staff changes? Please let us know so we can update your contact information. Scan the QR code to the right or contact Rauslyn Laviolette, our Choose Life Officer and she will provide you with the link to complete the form.



## CULTURAL DATABASE

Do you know of anyone interested in sharing their cultural or land-based teachings, skills, and/or gifts with Choose Life? Please fill out the Cultural Helper Form or request the form and we can provide it as a PDF fillable form. The form is also available at: Choose Life - Nishnawbe Aski Nation ([nan.ca](http://nan.ca)). You can also scan our QR code. If you have any questions regarding the Cultural Helper Database or would like a additional information forwarded to you, please contact Kiaya Drake.



## SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

This can be teachings, resources, community photos, activities and/or events being held in your community. Why? Because your contributions can inspire other Choose Life programs and support even more youth. You can also nominate someone in our Honorable Mentions section. You can do this by scanning the QR code or email us for links.

