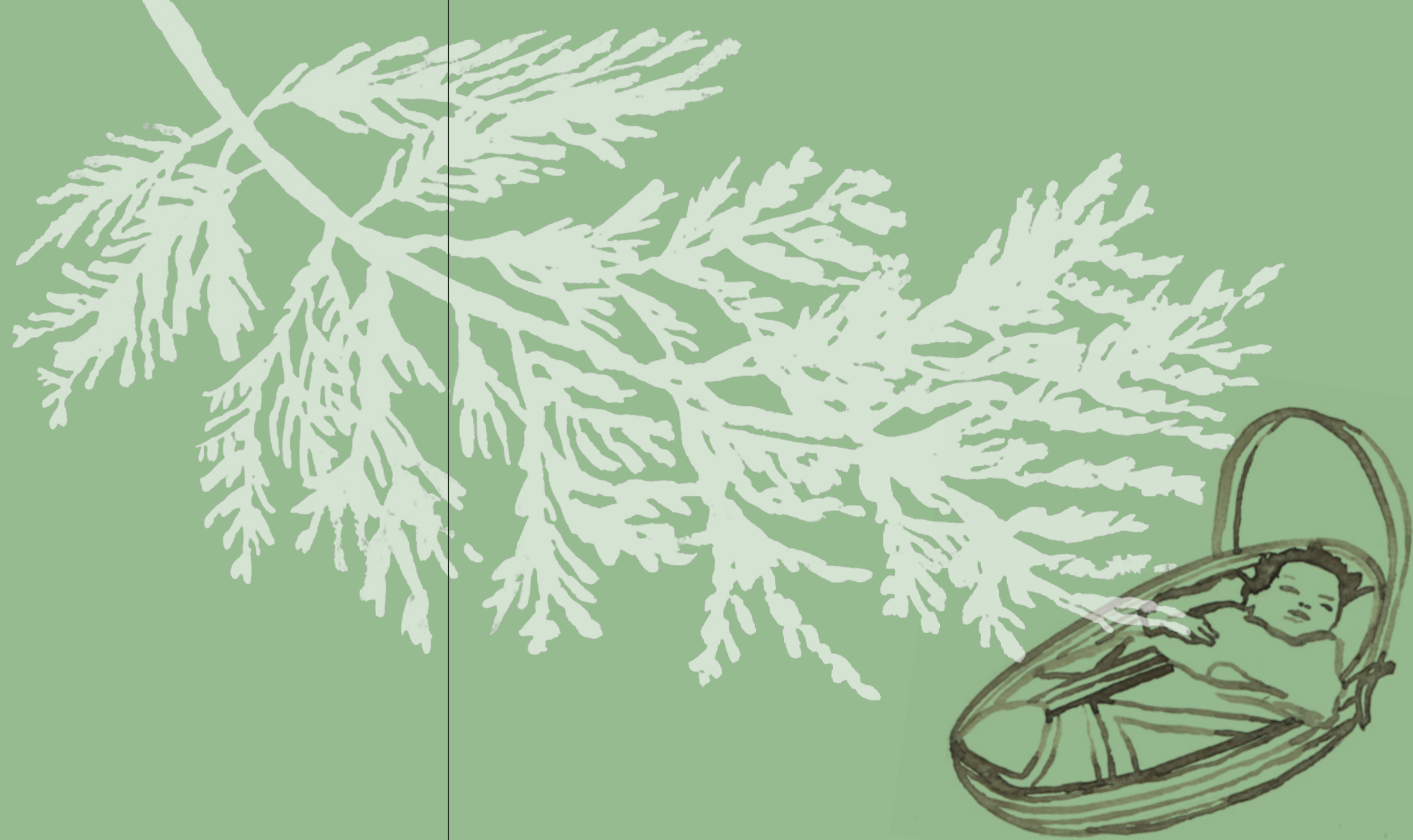




qaxaye metštəm

(Re)building our relations: A Tla'amin Service Model





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TLA'AMIN NATION

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qaxayε mεtštεm

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OPENING CIRCLE

"We need to re-imagine what it looks like so it's truly on our terms, in our ways. We need to create our own standard that is led by what we know since time immemorial. That needs to be in the forefront."¹

"We used to be hesitant to share our culture and teachings. We have to share what we have, otherwise our culture is not going to continue."

"It is time for us to be strong and firm about what we will or will not accept, as a self-governing Nation."

"Bringing back traditional ways of learning – our stories, language, and teachings were passed on orally: Show, Repeat, Learn."

qaxayε mεtštεm means many working together to accomplish something. This captures the spirit and purpose of this Service Model – it represents the philosophy behind our collective work to deliver care through programs and services in accordance with Tla'amin ways. This Service Model outlines the concepts we hold in our hearts and minds as we plan, design, and deliver services; as we relate to one another in service delivery; and as we make decisions, monitor progress, and evaluate services.

¹ All quotes are from Tla'amin qaymıx^w (people)

This Tla'amin Service Model expresses perspectives and teachings offered by Tla'amin qaymıx^w through a range of community engagements, brought together through the čičye² Circle, and informed by insights from other Nations about how they frame their knowledge to support their resurgence and revitalization processes. Throughout this Service Model, you will see quotes and stories by Tla'amin qaymıx^w who have contributed to this process – including Elders, grandparents, parents, and other Tla'amin qaymıx^w, based on both their personal and professional experiences. Many of the teachings embedded in this Service Model in fact came about through the process itself – as we were gently corrected, as we were in conversation and relationship with one another, and as we told of our experiences. These all held wisdom that is now embedded in this Model.

This is a living document, representing where we are at the present moment in time. Our Service Model will continue to evolve and change, as we do, yet remain grounded in ʔəms taʔow.³

ʔeyičın

ʔeyičın means top of the mountain. From the top of a mountain we can take in the whole view – the lands, the waters, the plants, the animals, the people – and see how each of these things exist in relation to one another. When we take a mountain top view of the Tla'amin Service Model, we see its wholeness in its surrounding context, and can keep this in mind as we we read about its individual phases.

From the mountaintop, we see the whole horizon: the past, the present, and the future. Tla'amin qaymıx^w come from a rich history of well-being that was produced through relationship with the territory, and maintained through the passing on of teachings about how to exist in right relations with the environment and people, and teachings about how to raise the next generations to do the same. This kept us well for literally thousands of years.

² grandmothers
³ our teachings



Settlers coming here and imposing colonialism – stealing our land, kidnapping our children – created ruptures in our social fabric. This is a relatively short time ago, and we carry the legacy of that disruption in our relationships today. We continue healing by drawing on our teachings, investing in the restoration of our well-being, and addressing our trauma and patterns of behaviour.

“We need to teach our children the history of residential school, how it impacted our people in so many unimaginable ways, and that it still exists in many families today. It was not our parents’ or their parents’ fault for the pain and suffering of growing up in a dysfunctional environment. It gives a deeper understanding and helps to forgive easier. It puts an end to the vicious cycle and not repeat history.”

Delivering our own programs and services to our loved ones in our own ways is key to the healing work needed to move forward. That future state is partly about restoring how things were, but also about bringing that into the present, recognizing that we’re all here to stay. This Service Model helps everyone involved to better understand who we are and what we care about as Tla’amin qaymıx^w in our service delivery.

“Connections to the past, present, and future: without those connections we’d be lost. Connections to the past, present, and future: with that we can go forward.”

With that in mind, the Tla’amin Service Model is modeled on a xa:p, a baby basket. In order to understand this conceptual framework, we will look at each of its phases, and how they relate to each other. The phases of the xa:p are as follows:

| PHASE OF BASKET-MAKING | WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US |
|---|---|
| hohojε (getting ready to do something) | It outlines what is foundational to every aspect of the Service Model |
| xaλ (to love something) | It outlines the purpose of the Service Model that guides our work |
| hinεč (building something from the bottom up) | It outlines interconnected pathways for taking action within the Service Model |
| x^woρε?εč (basket weave) | It outlines how all Tla’amin qaymıx ^w of all stages of life uphold and strengthen the Service Model, and our responsibilities to one another |
| łaq^watčx^w pičos čuy (thread the lace on the baby basket) | It outlines how the Service Model is inclusive of all Tla’amin qaymıx ^w |
| toyqεtən (hoop over the basket) | It outlines that there are formal sources of guidance and direction – our protocols, as expressed in laws, policies, and governing orders – so we can all consistently implement the Tla’amin Service Model |
| mačεt (to rub with oil or cream) | It outlines the importance of taking care of something so it lasts and how we commit to making best use of our resources and being good stewards |

hohoje

hohoje means getting ready to do something. Tla'amin teachings tell us that that the process is as important as the outcome, and includes forward planning, preparing ourselves, and carrying ourselves in the right way. These are the same teachings we will apply when designing, delivering, and evaluating our services.

Before we can make a $\chi a:p$, we need to gather all of the supplies – we need to dig the roots, clean and prepare the roots, and gather and dye the cherry bark. This requires many people to contribute, and sometimes requires us to travel far together. We need to plan our route, ensure we have all of the tools and other things we need for the journey, and bring people with different skills and roles: those who are able to convey the teachings and direct the work, those who carry out the hard work of gathering and carrying, and those who need to learn the process. Before we take any roots, we prepare ourselves – we acknowledge our ancestors and give thanks to the land and the tree that is providing roots or bark. We keep these good thoughts, gratitude, and positive intentions in our minds as we carry out the work.

This process of hohoje, or getting ready to do the weaving through planning, gathering, and readying supplies, is inextricably tied to the land, our cultural practice, and to ?ay?ajuthem .³ These three conditions are in place throughout the work and are what allow for a $\chi a:p$ to be made. They are the enabling conditions for a Tla'amin Service Model – these need to surround and be embedded in everything we do.

3 the Tla'amin language



Culture: Our culture is comprised of our belief systems, taʔow, values, and shared understanding, including our spirituality. Culture is living. It is important for our work and lives to be grounded specifically in Tla'amin culture and related practices and traditions, recognizing that every culture is different.

“You have to be proud of who you are. What are the values our people have? Honour, respect, care, love. Our taʔow taught all those things. We instill those values in everything that we do. We've got a long way to go, but we're in a better place than we were.”

Language: ʔayʔajuθəm represents our unique worldview and relationship with ʔəms giʔe⁴ as Tla'amin qaymıx^w. We must continue to find ways to use our language in our day-to-day operations to support language revival and celebrate Tla'amin culture. This will help us to maintain strong cultural connections and is foundational to Tla'amin cultural continuity and resurgence.

“Work together to bring back the teachings and the language. English does not encapsulate what our teachings hold, and what our ancestors taught us.”

Land: Tla'amin creation stories speak of how the Creator put Tla'amin qaymıx^w on this land and waterways, and of a deep connection to the land from the time of birth when Elders bury the umbilical cord in a special place within the territory. This connection is nourished by Tla'amin teachings, which show how the people are bound to the lands and waters of this territory since time immemorial. The health of ʔəms giʔe is the health of the people. We rely on our lands, waters, and resources for our cultural identity, economic prosperity, traditional teachings, and

health and wellness. We need to ensure that all Tla'amin qaymıx^w and families have opportunities to rebuild, reconnect, and be in relationship with our lands and waters. This will support transmission of ʔəms taʔow and knowledge to future generations.

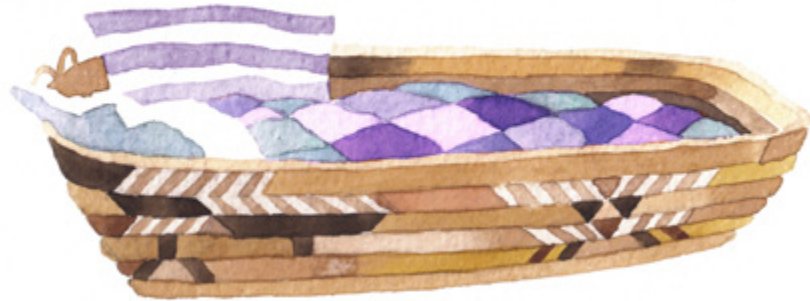
“Moving home was huge impact. My parents and my late husband are buried here. It's important my children see and know where I grew up and how far we have come as a nation. My belly button's buried here as well as my grandchildren's so this is where home will always be to us.”

“The more time you spend on the land, the more you grow to know how the land works, its cycles.”

Doing planning and properly getting ready provides the foundation for the entire system, but colonial intrusion has eroded our connection to land, language, and culture as the core aspects of our identity. We need to rebuild those connections with every action we take in order to restore the core of who we are. We can see that every stitch in this basket is connected with the land, the culture, and the language.

“If you can take one thing out of your life that hurt you, when you become that parent you're not going to do the same because you know how it felt. And better still if you can take two things out, then we're going to become better as a people. You know, the seven generations? So, I think about that too.”

As an adult, I visit more with family and get teachings from them. I learn things every day. Having a baby, and what to do with the umbilical cord. I had no idea! And now we know better, and our teachings are what we need to learn.”



χαλ

Baby baskets are made with love and care to hold, comfort, and protect our most sacred responsibility: our youngest and most vulnerable *jeje*.⁶ The core purpose of weaving a baby basket is to express love, care, and protection from the Nation, community, and family – and to have that love passed down.

⁶ relative

“Children aren’t ours; they’re gifts from the Creator. They’re put on this earth by the Creator for us to look after, so we have to do our best.”

The cedar roots are dug, and then they are carefully cleaned and prepared. Then the baskets are skillfully woven by those who have learned this important skill from others before them. As such, *χα:ḗ* are crafted by many, many hands and hearts. *χα:ḗ* are often made for the initial purposes of a particular baby, but are built to last. They are then used by many babies in a family, and this treasured possession is passed down through generations. In this way, a *χα:ḗ* provides practical and emotional connections among generations past, present, and future, as well as with the land and teachings about family and caring for ourselves and each other. The work to prepare for, develop, use, and pass the *χα:ḗ* to future generations represents the core purpose statement of the Tla’amin Service Model:

Work together and in our own way to raise current and future generations to be healthy, thriving, and culturally strong.

Each element of this purpose statement was carefully crafted and chosen, and is deeply meaningful to this Service Model:

“Work together”: Our teachings are inclusive of everything and everyone and acknowledge our need to look after all and to not leave anyone behind. They remind us that we move forward by working together.

“The protocol is seen and learned [on tribal journeys]: When we get there, we’re on the canoe and our spokesperson would say, “I’m hungry, I’m tired, can we come ashore?” So that’s when we get welcomed into their territory by the host Nation. That’s one protocol; there are different ones. And there

are a lot of teachings I learned on Tribal Journeys: respect for all the different Nations; patience is a great big one; strength, culture, and identity. I find the čičyε Circle makes you stop and think about these things: identity, respect, patience. Because you have to be very patient for a lot of things that are going on within your family. Teach your kids respect. You've got to respect everybody's going through something in their own life."

"In our own way": Our Nation is self-determining, our governance approach is guided by our taʔow. This reminds us that we move forward by centering who we are and where we come from.

"For me, it's about teaching our kids our way. When we do our ceremonies – we've done them for thousands of years – that's how we take care of each other, how we look after each other."

"I am reminded of a conversation I had with my late mother-in-law who spoke of the benefits of living intergenerationally. Before European contact when families lived together, there was a lot of built in support for parents, and many opportunities for children and youth to learn from their grandparents."

"I'm just very happy that we're moving things in a new direction, with more of the decision-making coming back to citizens. It builds the community up. It can't happen soon enough."

"Raise current and future generations": The strength of our taʔow comes from being passed down from generation to generation. As we inherited the taʔow from our ancestors, it is our responsibility to pass that along to future generations. This reminds us that we move forward by always keeping future generations in mind when making decisions today.

"As a child gets older, the teaching [about responsibility] increases for what they are doing in their daily lives, but the love and comfort never stops. It should continue their entire lifetime."

"What's important is loving your children, just spending time with them."



“Healthy, thriving, and culturally strong”: Our taʔow is our source of well-being. When we all carry the taʔow, we are all well, individually and collectively. This reminds us that from a Tlaʔamin perspective, wellness means ‘healthy, thriving, and culturally strong’. This reminds us that we move forward by centering the wellness of our people.

“We have to look to what has made families healthy for thousands of years: we look at that as guidance and identity and culture.”

“We all belong, and come from the same place, and stand under the same cedar hat. We maintain that and keep it going.”

This purpose statement is at the heart of every stitch that follows. It reminds us that a Tlaʔamin Service Model is something we do together, and we already have everything we need right here among and around us.

“People visited house to house in the village. People would just visit. They’d come around with handwritten Christmas cards through the village. People would sit on their porches and watch the world go by. Having the family unit, including grandparents involved in children’s lives.”

hinəč

To construct the base of a basket is called hinəč, building something from the bottom up. This word reminds us that we must think about and actively build the strong foundations for a Tlaʔamin Service Model. Making a ɣa:p involves intentionally planning and crafting wholistic relationships between sticks, roots, bark, and other materials, with the weaver carefully maintaining their own mental, emotional, and spiritual energy while doing the work. This is a learning process and it takes many years to become a master weaver – as we learn, we improve, and we commit to undoing our stitches and fixing mistakes as part of this learning and improving process.





These teachings of relationship, wholism, self-care, and learning are four core pathways in this Service Model. These are the core foundations of the hineč that, when woven strongly – and interconnected with each other and guided by culture, land, and ʔayʔajuθem – will ensure the ɣa:p̓ is strong.

1. Relationships: We have always centered relationships in all we do and there is nothing that we do that doesn't involve our partnerships with each other. This includes relating with each other in community, with neighbouring Nations, and with governments and other partners. If we are grounded in this Service Model, our relationships can improve the work we do and grow our ability to do more.

“Always introduce. I learned a lot from my grandmother when she was here. Acknowledgement, introduction is so important when people walk through the door, and it doesn't matter how old they are. Acknowledge a person when they're coming to your house. That was my Granny's way. You hear open door policy – that's how she was. Memories of the stove, and she always had her tea on. Respect and acknowledging was so important. She was one of my teachers in my life.”

“There was a way of gently getting anywhere. The words that you use matter.”

2. Wholistic programming: We have experienced too much separation, and it is important to approach our Service Model wholistically and collaboratively. This means we work together across programs, departments, buildings, and entities to support the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social wellness of our people.

“Culture and medicines are tools to fight our way back from where we are.”

"We are siloed. We need to get together more. Otherwise, what we're trying to teach the kids isn't reflected in the other aspects of the system."

3. Care for workers: Caring for ourselves enables us to care for others. Uplifting, healing, learning, and reconnecting are what make us all well. The wholistic wellness of people who are in caregiving roles is a key priority in the Tla'amin Service Model.

"I can use myself as an example, it's never too late to learn. Learning our language is so difficult for me. Granny used to say: Our kids are always listening, even though they're playing. They hear us."

"When I moved in with my first husband's dad, he taught me [how to cook]. He didn't go to residential school. He showed me how to do breakfast, laundry, and do it early in the day. How to clean the dishes. Then when I had my kids, I didn't teach that right away, I did everything for them. I thought that was the right thing to do. But as they got older, I was like 'OK, they need to learn how to cook'. And so I'm glad they learned at a young age. And now my daughter is teaching her kids to make their lunches."

"Self-care would involve taking care of the body, and the mind as well. Definitely when the child arrives, you would have to take care of your thoughts and your actions. And even more so when you're a grandparent. Taking care of energy, taking care of self is crucial."

4. Continuous learning and improvement: Our core values include pit qwayεgens⁷ and λasəm qwayigən.⁸ These values remind us to work hard and do our best, and be willing to change as we learn and grow. A Tla'amin-led system will be better for our people; approaching our Service Model with humility and discipline encourages ongoing improvement in all we do.

"Strength. A lot of people aren't in great shape when they start [tribal journeys], but then you get out there, you get a feel for it, and get better. Nobody's perfect when they start, but by the time you're done with the journey you'll be so strong: There's no lily-dipping! Your arms and your mind will be so strong."

"In order to achieve this vision, we have to look within ourselves first. Self-reflect so we don't feed into the division. Integrate this into our lives and pass it on. Live it."

"A lot came from my grandma. She raised me. Anytime my mom was off doing her thing, I'd be at my grandma's house. Doing things in the community, follow along with her, and talk at the end of the day at the kitchen table: 'What did you learn from today? What did you see was happening?' And then she'd share what she saw. It was really great."

"A lot of parents and grandparents think they can't do it on their own. You can. You can brush your own child, your own grandchild. You can ask your daughter or son to join you in the living room on a Sunday. My late friend used to do that with her grandson. She gave him a lot of teachings."

7 humility

8 discipline

χ^wο^ρε[?]ε^č

χ^wο^ρε[?]ε^č means basket weave. Once the base has been constructed, the sides of the basket are woven. This involves the use of many roots, and careful work to transition from one to the other. It also involves intentionally and carefully creating a beautiful pattern through integrating the use of other materials such as cherry bark. The weaving of the χ^a:^ρ represents all stages of the **lifecourse**, including the transitions between them. The core purpose can only be realized if all generations of Tla'amin qaymıx^w are meaningfully woven into the basket – without them all, the basket is incomplete. Building up the Service Model from conception to death heals, strengthens, and supports individuals as they move through life. Importantly, it also supports our entire community – including future generations.




ʔiʔ k^waʔanəns ɔ̄ayemıx^w expresses the thought that when all the people in our community are well again, all around us will also be well. All rows need to be woven in their entirety in order for the basket to do its work.


“It all starts with respecting one another. Respect and love. Those are two important things for a family.”

Conception: While in the womb, we are connected with the world around us through our mother. Everything she hears, senses, and says comes to us through our connection with her, and this includes what others say and do around her. The wellness of the unborn baby requires that the mother and everyone around her is respectful and deliberate about their actions and words. This is important not only while the baby is in the womb, but it prepares them to be calm and well when they enter this world, too.


“My grandmother was like a midwife in Squirrel Cove where we’re from. She’d tell them the baby was in a breech position and massage them until the baby turned. My grandmother used to talk about the importance of massaging the mother while she’s pregnant. She used to talk about the mother’s wellbeing is just as important because the baby feels everything the mother feels. When I was pregnant, I could hear her tell my mother to find me something to do, because I was getting down. The women in the family took care of the pregnant women and helped keep them busy. It’s important to watch what we say around pregnant women because the baby in the womb hears everything. We have to watch what we say and what we do when we’re pregnant. Everything we see, hear, sense, smell while we’re pregnant moves to the unborn child. So the connection the mother and child have is more than we can see.”



“Taking care of the words that you say, taking care of your thoughts. Yes, even your thoughts come into play. And when you’re caring for children, all of these things come into play, even before the child is born.”




“Where I work, they do a few different ceremonies: within the year they celebrate a baby being born, making baby blankets.”




“We need to honour and respect what the woman goes through. Take care of her in a good way, then she can take care of her baby. That’s where a lot of the honouring the women’s ceremony comes in.”

Babies are precious, and at this stage of life we don’t place expectations on them; we let them know they are loved and that their needs will be met. During infancy, it is important to support the primary caregiver so that they are able to help the baby to feel secure and loved.




“You can say: ‘Can I hold your baby? You can go and have a coffee and I’ll be here.’ In a gentle way. Respecting the parent. Not making them feel like they’re overwhelmed by the situation.”




“Somebody taking the baby for a few minutes, give her a breather. Maybe the baby needs to be walked. All babies like to be walked.”


Toddlers may not have language to communicate their needs, so at this stage we work hard to understand what their behaviour is communicating. This sometimes requires a lot of patience and gentleness. At this stage, it continues to be important to provide consistency so they know where they belong, so supporting the primary caregiver is a continued priority.



“Young kids really pick up on feelings.”




“We don’t know the whole thing, but sometimes it’s hard for the child – they think granny and grandpa are not coming back. It’s a hard one. Maybe even leave them in short spurts – do it for an hour, and come back. Then two hours the next time. That way the child will relax, and know they’re coming back. Starting to feel comfortable. The grandparents and the child.”



“Being polite and being a decent human being goes a long way. You’re showing your kids by attitude and your love and care for them how they should grow up to be.”

During **childhood**, we begin teaching children about how to relate with the world. This requires non-intrusive and proactive guidance and direction. We can respectfully support and redirect each other as adults in this process, as this is a difficult thing to do alone.



“Every child is different. One is quiet, the other is jumping up and down climbing trees.”

“Supporting the child means supporting the whole family.”

"It would be helpful to learn this stuff so I could teach it to my kids. Or if my kids learn about it and have questions, I'll actually be able to answer instead of saying 'I don't know'."

Youth are learning how to take on more and more responsibility. As they gain independence, ceremony and protocol can instill clarity and pride in who they are. Being particularly mindful of communicating with positive words while establishing expectations is important.

"I took youth on tribal journeys. I was trying to get them to learn how to be a community, to work together. If they feel comfortable they can start to heal stuff."

"You're still going to love your kid no matter what age they are, but as they get older they do need more responsibility. One or two chores throughout the week. How are they going to learn if they aren't shown or taught? Every kid needs responsibility, otherwise they don't learn responsibility."

"It would be nice to bring back the stages of growth ceremonies. It makes the child feel loved, cared about, gives them direction, and gives a sense of why they are here and their responsibilities as a human being."

As youth become **adults**, expectations for them to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions increase. Building them up through both gentle and firm guidance will support them to be strong as individuals, and for their family and community. Connection and joy are important, and depending on how they experienced earlier stages of life, they will need ongoing healing and learning.

"Even as an adult we're learning every day. So if you don't have access to somebody that's teaching these things as a child, if you're open to learning it then great – learn as an adult, or a teenager."

Parent/Auntie/Uncle: Parents guide their children by modeling and teaching our values. This is not something parents do alone, but with the support of the $\check{\epsilon}\rho\theta^9$ and other trusted adults around them. Parents can reach out to others for support, and others can gently and respectfully step in and share this responsibility of raising children.

"If parents aren't supported, kids become the parents. We need support for the supports – keep their cup filled up."

"As a mom, when your kids stop listening to you, I go to someone else to tell them and they hear it. That's why community and family is so important."

"We need to be very aware of where we are at in life, and make the best call for the children because they're innocent and they don't necessarily have the words to speak up for themselves. Children don't necessarily have the words to use to be able to say, 'you're not giving me 100%'. So, we have to do it for them. We need to be more aware of our own energy and the energy of anybody else we're with."




Grandparent: Traditionally, grandparents pass on knowledge to parents and grandparents in the context of daily life. Doing things together, sharing food, and telling stories, important teachings and values are passed down through generations. These connections bring joy and purpose to daily life for everyone involved.

“I try to instill sharing in my grandkids whenever we do something, like picking berries. We always share with the Elders that can’t get out and do it for themselves. When we distribute, my grandkids bring it to the door and hand it over. It’s nice to see them carry that on. It’s always been that way, long ago. Fish, deer meat, clams – you always share what you have. It’s a good feeling.”


“Back in the day, the kwukwpa¹⁰, the čičye, and the čepθ would look after the young ones. They were always around family. Even though the parents were hunting or fishing or gathering, the family was still intact because the grandparents had a responsibility with the kids. The old people would show you how to do things. They’d hold you and give you all that love.”

Elder: Elders, or old people, play a very important role in keeping and sharing knowledge. They may or may not be grandparents, but through their experience and everything they’ve learned from those who came before them, they have a lot to offer the community. As such, Elders must be treated with respect, listened to carefully, and cared for.


¹⁰ grandfather



“I learned some of the language from being around the Elders. We were always around them, so you picked up on things they said. I can’t speak it, but my kids and grandkids can.”




“I think of all the meetings that the Elders came and sat at the front of the room, and yeah – This is what the kids witness, as who they will be and what they will emulate. It’s so important.”



“Because I took every opportunity to sit with the old people, and hear their stories. That’s the thing. There was no discipline in our time. We were always told in story form. It came in a story.”


Death: The end of life is a time of transition for the person who has passed, and for everybody connected with them. This time is one of reverence, respect, and reflection. It teaches us a lot about how to live, and how to stay connected with our ancestors and their teachings.




“When you lose somebody in your family, it’s a new beginning without that loved one that you lost. And it’s a really powerful time, because we have to follow those teachings for one year. This year of firsts without them, they’re there with us. It’s a powerful time to focus on yourself and improve anything in your life that you want to improve because they’re going to be close with us for a while. All we have to do is ask and they’re going to be around us. We do our best for a year to focus on good things, to take a deep breath and not get mad. Because we can set a pattern for the rest of our lives if we’re not careful. We can get stuck in a rut at that time.”

The lifecourse teachings as presented here are about the connections that help us grow and develop. The wellness of the young ones is reliant on those who care for them, and caregivers need to be supported in order to do their jobs. This support comes from those who have learned through experience before them – grandparents and other Elders. Old people also need to be cared for and treated with respect because of the important role they play in the lifecourse cycle. It is by building intergenerational connections that the entire Service Model comes to life.


Importantly, lifecourse teachings are not age-dependent. We can begin learning – or start learning again – no matter how old or young we are. And, at every stage of the lifecourse we all have something to teach or contribute as well. Master weavers teach new weavers how to make a basket. The knowledge is carried forward through generational relationships so that the work can be done by new hands and Tla’amin ways are passed forward in perpetuity.



“One phrase that I love is ‘we lock arms for our children’. It’s a way of protecting and standing by our children. It could be one of the many things we think about when drafting and discussing things.”



“It takes a village to raise a child. When it comes to this kind of work: support and strengthen one another. Sometimes one of us is weaker, together we can get stronger.”



“It’s such a gentle way to correct a child. Instead of lecturing about what they’ve done, you tell about what mink did. It takes away from them feeling bad.”

“When my children were six and nine, and my father lived in our home. I asked my boys to put their toys away and get ready for a bath. They continued playing. Then their grandfather said, ‘excuse me, boys, I just heard your mother ask you to do something...you better get to it.’ They quickly jumped up and got ready for the tub. The way they responded to that grandparent voice was a big help to me. I noticed this when I used the traditional language, too. I only knew a few phrases but just as my boys responded quickly to their grandfather’s voice, they also did to their ancestral language. I could say, ‘let’s go sit down’, and they might linger. If I said, ‘kwaga hošt kwanačim’, they came to the table.”



łaqwatčx^w pičos čuy

łaqwatčx^w pičos čuy refers to threading the lace on the baby’s basket. This wraps tight around the baby and makes them feel snug, secure, and loved.

Tla’amin qaymıx^w believe in the importance of all of our people feeling that sense of security and belonging. We’ve also heard that getting to know a particular child or family is necessary before deciding how to support them, because everyone is different, and every situation is different. łaqwatčx^w pičos čuy represents our commitment to inclusion and belonging. It reminds us that being curious and responsive to uniqueness is part of the Tla’amin Service Model, including considering:

Gender: We all have important roles in our families and Nation. This includes t̄mtumıš¹¹, nageptiy¹², and people of all genders, including t̄m̄j̄ε¹³. Learning about the functions we all have to play and having opportunities to fulfill them is part of the Tla’amin Service Model.

“The dog children story to me is the resilience of just being a woman. In that story she’s left, she’s pregnant. She doesn’t try to leave. She stays and has her children. She creates her own environment, shows them what she’s been taught, and then everyone comes back. She’s strong and takes control.”

“čičye was always the protector of the children.”

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- 11 men
 - 12 women
 - 13 transgender

"I was trained as a counsellor, but when I heard Elders talking, they said 'you have to be proud of who you are'. That's when I started to do different things with the men I worked with: spiritual bath, into the forest, getting different medicines. When I started doing that, the guys started to change. Because that's who they are. It's an identity thing. It was teaching them respect."

"Two-spirit identity was new to me about 10 years ago. When I learned about that part of our culture and heritage, that felt good to me. There was a term for this, before everything. I wish that was more prevalent in our teachings. I think the binary influence of catholicism damaged us pretty well. I didn't know the word for it until today."

Ability: From a Tla'amin perspective, we are all acknowledged and embraced for our gifts, including children, youth, and adults with a wide range of abilities and support needs. This reminds us that the differences among us make us stronger, and requires that we create opportunities for everyone to participate and experience belonging.

"A vision is that there would be a safe play space for children with all abilities, considering their physical challenges and also providing access to children who have different sensory preferences. I dream of having accessible trails for community members to get out into nature and maybe having a community track chair that can be used by any member with physical challenges."

"I think it would have been more successful if I had had some knowledge of FASD. I had no knowledge of any of that and the behaviours that come with that. I don't think I was supported enough."

"There are other areas in the community that are not accessible for a wheelchair – trying to get down onto the beach in the community. Being able to get in the water is important for enjoying summer."

People living on and off Tla'amin lands: Regardless of where we live, we are one Nation. We are all relatives: tuwʉšt¹⁴ and people living on Tla'amin territory. This reminds us that building and maintaining connections with our ʒeʔaʒe¹⁵ can happen on Tla'amin lands, virtually, and in urban and other communities.

"I only recently was able to find the Tla'amin Nation website and the Facebook group, and starting to reach out to more family and things like that."

"I know it's not going to happen for every single one, but something to encourage off lands members to come home, visit their family, participate in ceremony. It's such a good practice to be holding up people's mental health and cultural connections."

"In the city it's hard for them to find their culture. But it's really important that the kids know what their culture is. My adopted child doesn't know his culture, but he learned Coast Salish from us. We took him to culture nights when we lived in [city]."

"I'm only just meeting my family as an adult, and it really sucks because I don't know my uncles or aunties over there. I've never been there [to Tla'amin territory] and I really want to go. And now that I have kids I really want them to know who they are, where their mom came from. I wasn't given that option, but I want my kids to have that option."

¹⁴ this word is used to refer to Tla'amin people living off Tla'amin territory

¹⁵ relatives

Sister Nations: komoks¹⁶, λoʔos¹⁷, χ^wεmaɬku¹⁸, and təʔamen¹⁹ share a language and relations. We were historically one people, and share many teachings that come from living on this land since time immemorial. This reminds us that our relationships with our Sister Nations are some of our most important relationships.

“The Indian Act separated us. Now we’re coming back together, but we have the idea that we’re different.”

“Getting Sister Nations together to host a weekend sports day. Have a good weekend – include drumming and singing. Take turns hosting. That’s where our families are from. That’s often what happens – we’d find relatives when going on a tournament. Get to say hi and see how everyone’s doing. There are a lot of benefits that come with sports - it’s also the connection with the extended families.”

-
- 16 Comox
 - 17 Klahoose
 - 18 Homalco
 - 19 Tla’amin

toyqetən

There is a hoop over the χa:ɸ, called toyqetən. A blanket is often draped over the toyqetən, and this protects the baby from sun, wind, or other elements. The toyqetən represents Tla’amin self-governance, expressed through Tla’amin law, protocols, policies, and agreements that protect the Tla’amin qaymıx^w through providing overarching structure and guidance.





Tla'amin governing traditions are our protocols, laws, and processes of justice, rooted in our worldview. They provide us with guidance about how we can show up for ourselves and each other. They can be particularly helpful in finding our way through challenging experiences or encounters (such as conflict). They also help us advocate for our rights and know our responsibilities. Formalizing our governing traditions and protocols into our Constitution, laws, policies, and agreements is how we ensure consistent understanding and application of our ways and authority, and can serve to coordinate our law with those of other governments we work with.

The P'ah story, for instance, illustrates that ceremony and protocol are centrally important, as is knowing how to conduct oneself in a way that upholds protocol.¹⁶ This story also demonstrates that Tla'amin laws exist for a reason, and there are consequences if our behaviour disregards them. Learning and understanding this requires listening carefully, being still, being patient, and paying attention.

"It's life's lessons and teachings. How to behave when you're growing up. But it's told in animal stories, and it relates to us as human beings. All the animals, the birds, and bees, and bushes."

We can bring Tla'amin law to life in how we carry ourselves and fulfill our responsibilities.

"Utilizing our own laws, getting away from colonial ways."

"Our own laws should be top-standard when it comes to inclusivity."

"The power of having reclaimed decision making after the Indian Act."

¹⁶ The P'ah story can be found on page 9 of this document: <https://www.tlaaminnation.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/May-7-9-workshop-What-We-Heard-summary.pdf>



mačɛt

mačɛt means to rub something with oil or cream. A lot of thought, care, and work goes into making a xa:p, and it is intended to last for a long time. Baskets are carefully inspected, repaired if damaged, put away carefully when not in use, and rubbed with oil to keep the basket supple and shiny. Caretaking and valuing our resources and sustaining them over generations is part of our way of life.

Developing processes for this ongoing maintenance and stewardship is an important aspect of the Tla'amin Service Model. We are careful in our planning and decisions to ensure we make best use and take care of our resources and assets. We evaluate our programs and services, providing opportunities to check in about our performance, and adapt when needed to reflect changing circumstances. This maintenance phase of making a xa:p requires us to think about tomorrow in the decisions we make today and ensure we have resources for future generations.

“If I’m doing something better, maybe my great-grandchildren will be better off because of it. That’s how the change will come.”

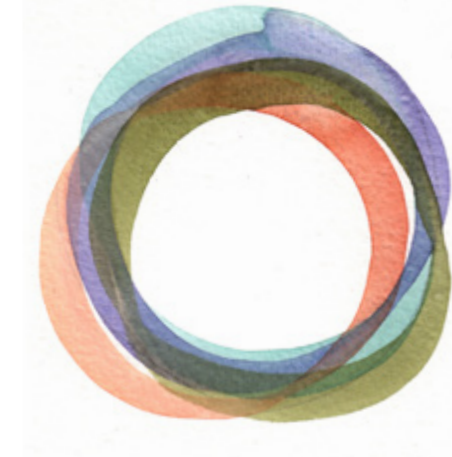
Closing circle

We know that nothing important or lasting gets accomplished by one of us alone. qaxayε metštəm means lots of us working together to do something – we are all part of the circle needed to implement this Tla’amin Service Model and (re)build our relations. Each of us has a role to play in keeping the circle strong by living the teachings described in this Service Model in our day-to-day lives. We can all:

- **Role model** through our own language and behaviour, grounding ourselves in the teachings – such as humility, responsibility, lifelong learning – in our relationships.
- Recognize ourselves as part of our family in all we do and **uphold our family honour** with words and actions.
- **Pass on what we know** and remember, including speaking the language and sharing teachings in story form.
- **Use new tools** and technology that we have access to so we can share knowledge and practices with each other even when we are not all in community together.
- **Respect protocol** and integrate ceremony in everything we do, to make this Service Model real in day-to-day life.
- **Be gentle, encouraging, and supportive** even when corrective action is needed in order to support learning and growth.

By working together in this way, we will implement this Service Model in:

- designing and planning services and programs;
- recruiting and training service providers and staff;
- administering and monitoring services and programs;
- developing laws, policies, and procedures;
- making decisions about allocation of funding and resources;
- negotiating agreements and partnerships;
- gathering, managing, and using information; and
- everything we do.





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17 Thank you all





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