

PEACE  
JOY  
WISDOM



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

# Our Lived Way

- WORKBOOK -

Liberatory Healing Focused Education  
for Survivors & Peers



**Washington State Native American Coalition  
Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault**

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*Reach Out to Us*



## WHO WE ARE

# WomenSpirit

## Our Vision

**WomenSpirit** envisions a nation where Native women are treated with honor and respect, where she is protected under the law and her personal sovereignty is never compromised. Your safety and wellbeing is our priority.

## What We Do

**WomenSpirit** is the official Department of Justice and Office on Violence Against Women Tribal Coalition. We serve the needs of tribal programs and provide direct services to those victims that tribal programs do not/cannot serve through its program areas.

**WomenSpirit** is the subject matter expert on matters related to ending violence against AI/AN women and their families. We provide assessment and evaluation of Tribes/Tribal programs relating to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and sex trafficking.

## Sayu ? X Wey Family Safety Center

Our **Sayu ? X Wey Family Safety Center** provides compassionate and confidential legal advocacy services to survivors of domestic violence living in the service areas of Elwha Klallam, Port Gamble Klallam, Jamestown Klallam, Hoh, Quileute, Makah and Suquamish Tribes, both on and off reservation.

526 N. 5TH AVENUE SEQUIM, WA 98382 (360) 681-3701



# OUR LIVED WAY

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**Our Lived Way** is a journey enriched with analogies, metaphors, and teachings. These elements and the inherent ability to connect to ancestral spiritual knowledge play a vital role in helping Native survivors live 'in a good way,' validating their paths, and fostering healing and liberation.

**Indigenous spirituality** is essential in helping survivors address the impact of historical and intergenerational trauma from the continuous violence built into the structure of colonialism and worsened by Western approaches of treatment. These modern problems have led survivors further away from their traditional and communal ways of living.

While each Indigenous culture has its unique beliefs and practices, the shared philosophy of living in harmony with Mother Earth and in alignment with the natural laws of the universe binds them together.

**Our Lived Way** presents a framework for survivors to move forward with awareness and confidence on their paths to recovery.



**sayu'? wəy**

**The breath that  
moves you  
forward in life.**



# GRATITUDE

## A Practice of Generosity

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### Gratitude

Gratitude is an internal characteristic. Allowing something to happen instead of trying to make it happen defines the difference of gratitude. It is how we feel. A person cannot exist in a state of fear and gratitude simultaneously. Gratitude plays a pivotal role as the threshold we cross to our connection to the Creator and intuitive guidance, uplifting us spiritually. Gratitude works with generosity to immediately turn negativity into positivity.

### Generosity

Generosity is our external expression in the world of our internal feeling of gratitude. It is a communal way of life built on the value of equality. In Indigenous culture, generosity is an act of honoring another person with a gift that will enhance their dignity, increase their joy, or improve their health. It's a cycle of giving and receiving, where what we seek for ourselves is apparent in the gifts we share with others.

### Prayer

Prayer is the act of connecting with our spiritual essence while in human form. It is a form of communication with the spiritual realm that is not limited by time or distance as we understand it. One does not have to be religious to pray and anticipate that their prayers will be acknowledged and considered. When we pray, we express our vision for the highest and best good for all people in their experiences. The beauty of prayer lies in its diversity of forms-it can be a silent reflection, spoken, sung, or expressed in a ceremony.



## SPIRITUAL MEDICINE

The four elements, fire, air, water, and earth are gifts from the Creator to help humans when their lives become imbalanced. Each element represents principles for living. Observe what principles need balancing in your life.

### Fire Element Principles

- warmth
- safety
- security
- food
- family
- community

**Foundational Lesson:** Teaches the vulnerability of our human condition.

## DEEP REFLECTION

In what ways are my Indigenous virtues of **gratitude** and **generosity** imbalanced? How can I bring these virtues back into balance with the principles and foundational lesson of fire?



## SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

### OUTLINE FOR INTENTIONAL PRAYER

#### 1. Begin by calling in your council of spirit guides.

*Grandfather, I'm calling on you; I need your guidance now.*

*Grandmother, I'm calling on you; I need your guidance now.*

*Ancestors, I'm calling on you; I need your guidance now.*

*Creator, I'm calling on you; I need your guidance now.*

#### 2. State your prayer in simple terms.

*I am facing [INSERT TROUBING ISSUE], and*

*I don't know what to do.*

*I bring this issue to you for your guidance.*

*Please bless this prayer with clarity, protection, and favor for the highest and best good for all.*

#### 3. Pray for Mother Earth.

*And please bless our Mother Earth with healing and protection and ease the suffering of all her children.*

#### 4. Close with gratitude and remembrance.

*I am grateful. We are all related.*

## APPLICATION

Use the outline to connect with your genuine voice to pray with intention. Praying with intention focuses on the *what* and *why* instead of the *how* and *when*. Intentional prayer allows the natural laws of the universe to deliver on our highest and best good.

Once it begins to flow effortlessly, you can customize it to make it uniquely your own.



# HONESTY

## A Practice of Integrity

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### **Honesty**

Honesty is an internal moral value that helps us see and celebrate life and who we are meant to be. It requires great effort to see ourselves as adequate, important, and accountable to ourselves and others. Honesty allows us to see our self-worth with clarity and overcome our tendencies to build walls around all the broken and embarrassing parts of ourselves. Returning to Indigenous ways of being will help us think and act from a place of honesty, leading to significant personal growth and a stronger sense of self.

### **Integrity**

Integrity, the actions we take in our daily lives, is not just a personal choice. It's a responsibility we have towards our community. In the times of our ancestors, a person's word was their bond and an essential aspect of the community's social health. Upholding integrity is not just about earning respect and trust; it's about contributing to the well-being of our families and society. Having integrity is something that others can say about us.

### **Mindset**

Our breath is the birthplace of our intention, the foundation of our mindset. Mindset is about how we see the world and how we see ourselves in the world. Celebrating life can be difficult when everything feels as if it is falling apart. Our minds can quickly fill with imaginary 'what-if' scenarios that can manifest into recurring themes. No matter what is going on, mindset is the decision we make to impact our lives positively or negatively.

## MENTAL MEDICINE

The four elements, fire, air, water, and earth are gifts from the Creator to help humans when their lives become imbalanced. Each element represents principles for living. Observe what principles need balancing in your life.

### Air Element Principles

- breath of life
- prayer
- blessing
- passion
- mindset
- service

**Foundational Lesson:** Teaches the celebration of life to help keep us on our journey.

## DEEP REFLECTION

In what ways are my Indigenous virtues of **honesty** and **integrity** imbalanced? How can I bring these virtues back into balance with the principles and foundational lesson of air?



## MENTAL PRACTICE

### BOWL OF LIGHT

#### Your Identity, Your Essence

*This bowl represents your identity, your essence - a vessel of shining light. When you honor and respect your light, you will grow in strength and integrity. You can do anything, understand all things!*

#### Your Response to Your Experiences

*However, if you interpret your experiences as bad, or from being fearful, worried, ashamed, stressed, or resentful, you are choosing to drop a stone into your bowl. The stones block your light.*

#### Holding Space, Your Energy

*The stones represent the pain and suffering we cause ourselves by resisting life instead of trusting and celebrating it, and by not accepting others or ourselves as we are. You cannot hold space for stones and light.*

#### Empty Your Bowl, Live Your Essence!

*If we continue to fill our bowl with stones, we will soon lose connection with our essence and feel separate from the Source of love and light. The good news is, you can choose to empty your bowl at any time.*

## APPLICATION

Get a bowl and stones to remind you of your choice to live with honesty and integrity.

Work with your bowl and stones. What do the stones represent? How are they blocking you from celebrating your life?

Now, turn over your bowl, choosing to live from your authentic self right now. Repeat every day.



# HUMILITY

## A Practice in Humbleness

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### Humility

Humility is the understanding that we are all part of a larger whole, equally important and interconnected. It is the awareness of the balance and equality of all life, whether human, plant, or animal. This understanding of equality is a key aspect of humility, as it allows us to present ourselves to others as neither better nor worse than anyone else. Embracing humility fosters a sense of inclusion and value, allowing us to experience life with a learner's mind.

### Humbleness

Humbleness is the actions we take in the world. We can learn to be humble through dialogue, a communication process that develops a practice of listening. In dialogue, there is no defending of opinions, and no counterpoints, but rather letting someone talk and present their viewpoint without interrupting or asking questions. You open your awareness to honor them by affirming and valuing their perspective and experiences.

➤ **AFFIRM:** To offer someone emotional support or encouragement.

➤ **VALUE:** To consider to be important.

### Positivity

Because people do not have the same thoughts and feelings about everything, they form different ideas and opinions about their experiences in life. When we come from a position of humility, we can listen to another's perspective and increase the positive energy of healing, health, and wellness in our relationships.





## EMOTIONAL MEDICINE

The four elements, fire, air, water, and earth are gifts from the Creator to help humans when their lives become imbalanced. Each element represents principles for living. Observe what principles need balancing in your life.

### Water Element Principles

- conception
- birth
- positive energy
- negative energy
- healing
- health & wellness

**Foundational Lesson:** Teaching the opening of our psychic abilities for connection to all other sentient beings and the psychic world around us.

## DEEP REFLECTION

In what ways are my Indigenous virtues of **humility** and **humbleness** imbalanced? How can I bring these virtues back into balance with the principles and foundational lesson of fire?



# EMPOWER YOURSELF

## EMOTIONAL PRACTICE

### EVERYONE IS UNIQUE

*People have different backgrounds and experiences that effect their perceptions and behaviors.*

### EVERYONE HAS A VOICE

*People are most authentic when they share their inner narrative.*

### EVERYONE HAS A CHOICE

*People have the right to make choices about their health and well-being.*

### EVERYONE CAN CONTRIBUTE

*People have something to contribute to the health and well-being of the community.*

## POSITIVE ENERGY

I can accept that people's interactions with me are unique to who they are.

I can listen to the other person's story because I appreciate being heard and not silenced.

I can acknowledge that others are on their own journey and choosing their own path too.

I can affirm and value the contribution that others make.

## APPLICATION

Trauma can be understood as “unresolved energies.” One way to release these unwanted negative energies is through water transfer:

- As part of a healing circle, cleanse yourself through smudging, meditation, or prayer.
- Allow the person or experiences associated with the trauma to come up.
- Acknowledge it and transfer it to the water, allowing Mother Earth to take the trauma and put it away from us.



## Compassion

### A Practice of Empathy

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### Compassion

Compassion heightens your ability to feel the same feelings someone else is feeling. It connects deeply with the understanding that someone else is a reflection of ourselves. We can experience compassion when we can look beyond our own needs and circumstances to feel the feelings of another. Compassion can be about feeling their pain, sorrow, joy, and happiness. Compassion opens space to heal ourselves and others.

### Empathy

Empathy, when combined with compassion, becomes a powerful tool for personal growth. It's the action we take that changes another person's experience, stemming from our ability to step into their shoes. Empathy isn't about mindlessly reacting to someone's pain. It's about determining the best use of our energy and knowing our limits, which requires a deep sense of self-awareness and self-reflection. More than that, empathy working with compassion is a collaborative force that connects us and moves us together on a shared, meaningful journey.

### Liberation

Liberation is participating in the silent cosmic energy of harmony. It connects with our sense of dignity, which is not just a value, but a powerful force that drives us to do the inner work of respecting ourselves and connecting to Mother Earth. When we allow or apply oppression to anyone or anything else, we walk away from our sense of dignity. Dignity is a root value of all life on Mother Earth. When we disregard dignity, we deny that our liberation is bound up together with one another.

## PHYSICAL MEDICINE

The four elements, fire, air, water, and earth are gifts from the Creator to help humans when their lives become imbalanced. Each element represents principles for living. Observe what principles need balancing in your life.

### Earth Element Principles

- integrity
- intention
- reverence
- consistency
- dignity
- respect

**Foundational Lesson:** Teaching the practicality of who we are, what we do, why we do it, and how we do it.

## DEEP REFLECTION

In what ways are my Indigenous virtues of **compassion** and **empathy** imbalanced? How can I bring these virtues back into balance with the principles and foundational lesson of fire?

## PHYSICAL PRACTICE

### MEDICINE WALK

A medicine walk allows us to disconnect from the low-vibration violence and negativity in our real-time and online worlds. The benefits of a medicine walk have powerful spiritual and psychic effects on our connection to other naturally high-vibration elements of creation in the natural world. It is the highest form of spiritual self-care.

#### Benefits to Spiritual & Psychic Areas

- Intuition and psychic senses
- Abilities in lucid dreaming
- Ability to sense various natural energy fields
- Ability to communicate with spirit guides and animals
- Effective connection of prayer with action.
- Awareness of natural earth medicine around us.
- Ability to deflect negativity and attract positivity.

#### Benefits to Physical Health

- Increased immune system function.
- Lowered blood pressure.
- Increased blood flow.
- Reduced mental distraction and forgetfulness.
- Improved cognitive abilities (focus, memory, thinking)
- Reduced anger and hostile reaction tendencies.
- Increased ability to manage stress, anxiety, depression.

## APPLICATION

Start by clearing your heart and mind space with 4 slow and deliberate breaths. Next greet the environment, introducing yourself and your reason for coming. Then, present your gift (tobacco, food, water) to Mother Earth. Sit for a while, observing the direction of the wind, focusing on an object, or connecting with spiritual entities of nature. Stand with bare feet on the ground, releasing what you are holding onto. Ask to be taught.



## WISDOM

# A Practice of Reflection

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### Wisdom

Wisdom, a manifestation of the life the Creator intended for us, is an aspect of spiritual intelligence. It bestows upon us the gift of clear perception, allowing us to see others and circumstances with unclouded clarity. We have clarity when we remove the obstacles and barriers from our thinking. Clarity cultivates wisdom. Wisdom is also relational, as it is our understanding of the relationship between seemingly unrelated things that allows us to arrive at conclusions applicable to life.

### Reflection

Reflection is a practice of vulnerability. It requires all the love you have for yourself, a deep appreciation for your own worth. It is like standing naked in front of a mirror, acknowledging all the things you don't like first so you can move on to see the positive things you missed. Reflection helps us unlearn what the modern world has conditioned us to think about ourselves. It empowers us to see ourselves, negative and positive, to find love for all we are.

### Life

To be liberated as Indigenous people is to understand the natural order of the Earth and our Indigenous spirituality. These concepts are embraced at the center of our being and implemented throughout our daily lives. The center is our life, where we can experience the present moment to understand our role and contribution as part of the collective. It's crucial to remember that if we become too absorbed in our past experiences or fearful of the 'what-if' scenarios of the future, we are not living our lives. The present is where liberation is actualized as life.



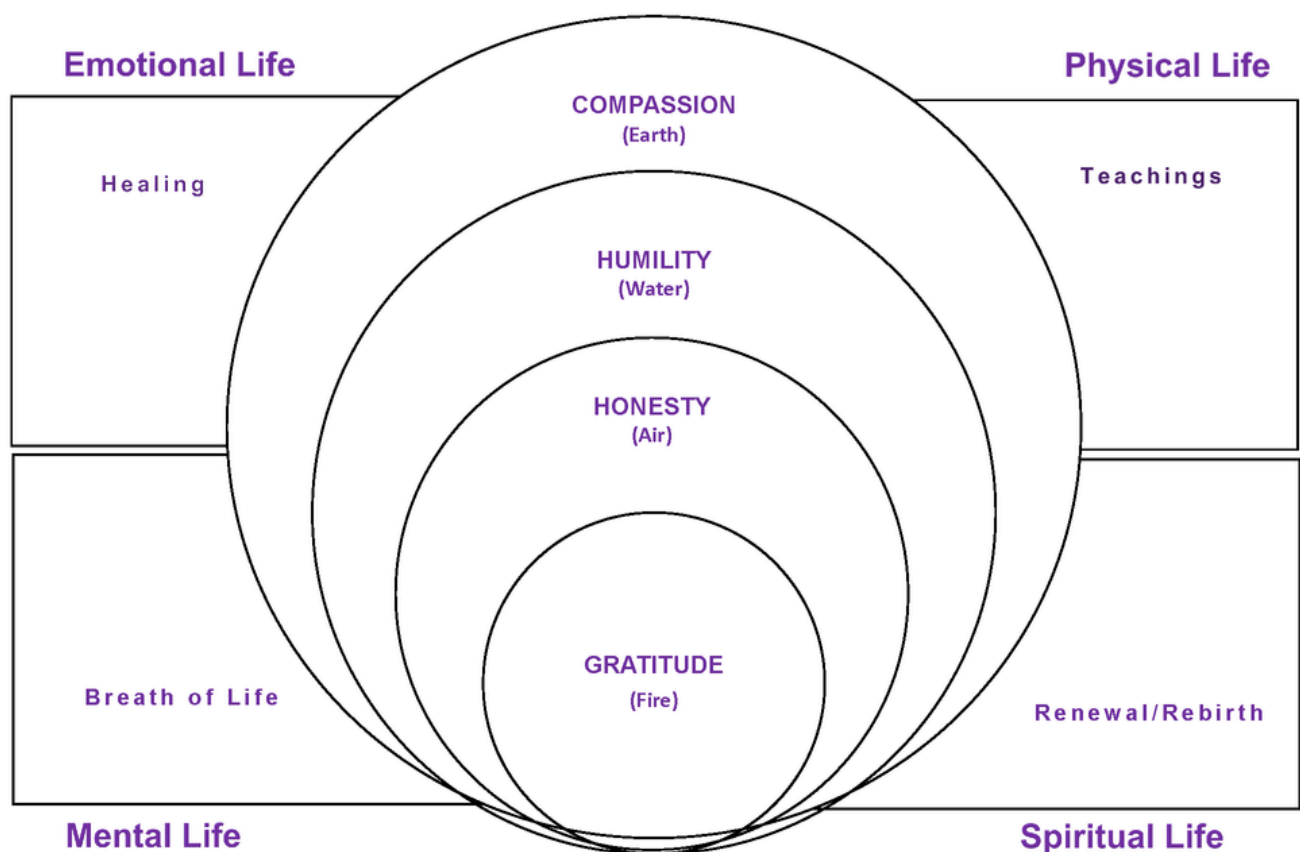
## CENTER OF LIFE MEDICINE

The four virtues, aspects of life, elements, principles, and foundational lessons represent a framework for wellness. A framework provides structure for daily living and direction for managing our behaviors in the experiences of our lives.

### Harmony

Harmony is the state of awareness that balances the expressions of peace, joy, and wisdom in our lives. The more we develop our internal structure and manage our behavior out in the world, we can experience the harmony of happiness and liberation.

### Wellness Framework





## REFLECTION PRACTICE

### MIRROR TALK

Stand naked in front of a mirror. Really see yourself. Observe all the negatives, all that you don't like about yourself, that your mind notices first. Now move to the positive. They may be harder to see at first. Perhaps you can look at your hands and notice they are like your mother's, small and soft. See yourself in the negative and positive to empower yourself to love all of yourself.

#### 5 Negative Things

#### 5 Positive Things



**What have you learned to think about yourself?**





## MY Path

### The Way Forward

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### My Path

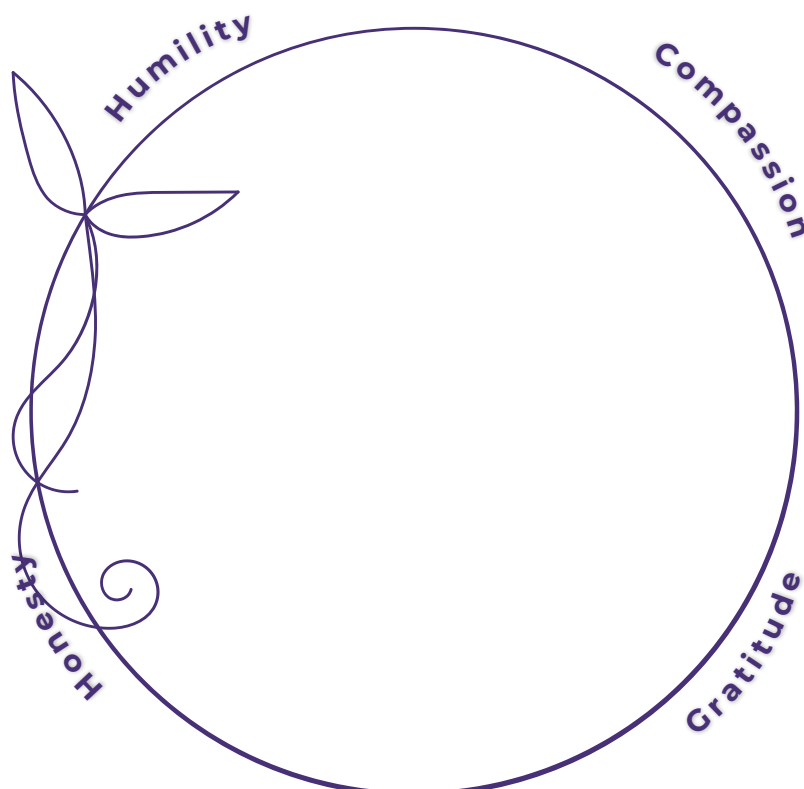
Life is meant to teach you. Your teachers will show up as moments and people who bring trouble into your life. Once you recognize your teachers and their challenges, it becomes easier to walk your path, integrating your awareness and knowledge into understanding how to live in a good way. Reflect on what you learned about who you are in your circumstances.



What has struck you deeply, making you want to live a more meaningful, connected, and empowered life?

**Teachers**

**Challenges**



# THE WAY FORWARD

Consider how far you've come learning from these teachings. What are your 'a-ha' moments? Reflect on the answers you wrote on each medicine page (spiritual, mental, emotional, physical, and center). When we share our new awareness, that's talking about it. When we apply it to life, that makes it real.



Where did you grow? How are you different? What did you learn that increased your awareness?

**Spiritual (Renewal/Rebirth)**

**Mental (Breath of Life)**

**Emotional (Healing Energy)**

**Physical (Teachings)**



## PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY

A personal mythology explores the beliefs we hold about our bodies, what we like to do with them, and how this effects our view of ourselves. Think about the choices you make about the way you dress, your creativity, and how they express who you are in the world. Draw a picture of yourself. Use pointers to explain features. Write down any myths you hold about the way you look, the way you do things, and why you make the choices you make. (e.g. my feet are wide and give me good balance)



## My Goals

### Living With Hope

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### Goals

Goals are the compass in every aspect of life - mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical. They signify the desired change in your personal, family, social, and purpose areas. You can set short or long-term goals that leverage your existing abilities or reach beyond them to learn new skills. Goals are not mere wishes; they are the pathways that help you to heal and make your contribution.

### Motivation

The drama of daily stress or our entanglement in guilt and shame can prevent us from achieving our goals. Desire is critical to your motivation. If you don't desire to achieve your goals, even the small ones, you will struggle with describing the details and finding pathways to accomplish them. Sometimes, we set 'avoidance' goals for things we do not want to happen, such as 'I do not want to get hurt.' Whether your goals reflect the motivation to attain (positive goals) or avoid (opposing goals), always start where you feel most capable.

### Barriers

As you practice developing your inner self with generosity, honesty, humility, and compassion, you will learn to observe behaviors and listen to the narratives you and others are telling. Within these stories, you will discover the challenges to achieving your goals in your willpower and problem-solving capabilities. These barriers will help you generate strategies not only to achieve your goals but also to measure and increase hope.

## HOPE-CENTERED

Living with hope is a path we must choose every day to increase the benefits to ourselves and those around us. Here's the cycle of a Hope-Centered life.



Adapted from the Science of Hope, Gwinn & Hellman, 2022..

## DEEP REFLECTION

Take a look at the areas of your life (personal, family, social, and purpose). In what areas do you have high hope? Low hope? Think about your level of satisfaction in each area.

## NURTURING HOPE

Choose one area of life (personal, family, social, purpose). Use the worksheet below to work on a goal.

### Level of Hope/Satisfaction

Area: \_\_\_\_\_  High  Low

### Level of Hope/Willingness

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_  Growth  Ability

### Goal Specifics

Is my goal about not wanting something to happen (avoidance) or attaining something (approach)?  Avoid  Attain

Is my goal easy (low effort, no support) or hard (high effort, need support) to achieve?  Easy  Hard

Is my goal short-term or long-term?  Short  Long

Does my goal require small or large scale change?  Small  Large

Who are the family members, friends, elders, or other relationships that can support the achievement of my goal? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will directly or indirectly benefit when my goal is achieved? \_\_\_\_\_

Overall, how successful do I feel I will be in pursuing my goal?

Not at all successful  A little successful  Somewhat successful  Moderately successful  Mostly successful  Very successful