

WHAT ELDERS DO AND WHERE THEY DO IT

By the NorCal Elder Council of 2019

Jerry Green, Kurt Reinkens (Co-Chairs)

Kelley Macmillan, Kelly Doughty, John Hunter, Jim Cherry

Our intention in the NorCal Elder Council is to clarify elder roles and functions, so that their evolution may be diversely suited to different regions, communities and I-Groups according to their individual interests and needs.

This vision addresses the “what” and the “where” of elder roles and functions, not the “how” of becoming an elder. Criteria may evolve defining trainings, qualifications and standards of preparation. We not concerned with those logistics here. Our intention focuses on the awareness of the roles and functions of eldering, enabling our collective intention to invigorate its value and identify the venues where eldering may occur.

Naming Elder Functions:

Models curious and compassionate listening.

Models vulnerability.

Inquires of the light in darkness.

Holds space for an ancestral perspective.

Inquires into safety, shadow, and connection to encourage protection of the container.

Holds the long-term view of group wellness.

Imagines and intuits unknowables.

Stewards the space for spirit/sacred.

Offers blessings.

Mentors others.

Note: This list does not include advising another man what you think he should do, even when asked or it is temptingly obvious. This is the vulnerable boundary that protects the value of eldering. Eldering begins with constraint, or restraint. Being receptive is at the root of our birth and in the foundation of our maturity.

Declared Elder roles may remain unclear unless they are:

A distinct part of community:

Are they identifiable as distinct in relation to the community from which they emerged?

Elders are identified by their declaration of affinity with serving elder functions.

Visible to community: Are they identified and seen? Elders can be distinct but unseen, as they have been, often isolated in their own groups.

Accessible by community: Are they available, shingles up, open for engagement?

Engaged with community: Are they contributing to a needed and requested dialogue with the community from which they emerged?

Where Eldering May Happen

In families

In communities

Serving at NWTA

I-Group Elder Councils

Serving I-Groups w/o elders

Mentoring new warrior initiates

Consulting warrior brothers

Elder Functions:

Models curious and compassionate listening.

Models vulnerability.

Inquires of the light in darkness.

Holds space for an ancestral perspective.

Inquires into safety, shadow, and connection to encourage protection of the container.

Holds the long-term view of group wellness.

Imagines and intuits unknowables.

Stewards the space for spirit/sacred.

Offers blessings.

Mentors others.