

ELDER PROTOCOLS

Our Elders guide us with their wisdom and leadership, offering teachings to all who wish to learn. At NVIT, we turned to them to help us understand our Vision, Mission, and Values in a deeper way. We asked: what do these Values look like when lived out, and how should we carry ourselves within them? In response, the Elders shared stories. These stories became more than lessons — they gave us a way of being. They shaped the concepts of ciyus da’a and ćx̣ẉiplaʔtn (Nlekepmx and Syilx, respectfully) that show us how to walk with our values in a good way, honouring both our identities and our Elders’ words.

“
...these stories, this language, these ways, and this land are the only valuables we can give you, but life is in them for those who know how to ask and how to learn...
 ”
 (Cajete, 1994)



PURPOSE

NVIT is guided by our Vision, Mission, and Values. These principles, grounded in the teachings of our Elders, ensure that how we speak, listen, and act reflects who we are as an Indigenous institution. NVIT policies provide structure; NVIT protocols bring in language, stories, and land.

REASONS FOR BEING

Vision

yaheʔtaʔ ~ ǰstcawt
 Our spirit, essence, emotions, and intelligence are good.

Mission

sləq̣məʔt ~ naḳẉuləṃnt
 We commit ourselves to sharing our traditional ways.

Values

zəʃ̣ẉo ʃwt ~ ḳẉcḳẉact
 Strength



Practice:
 Communicate with clarity, rigour, and respect for many ways of knowing.

Elder teaching:
 “Walk tall - we are strong.”
 Share knowledge with confidence, rooted in both culture and scholarship.

- Walk tall and be proud of who you are, not what you are.
- Work hard, set expectations, and raise the bar for ourselves and our students.
- Endure challenges and remember that resilience and perseverance are part of our strength.
- Listen to the stories - in them is wisdom, healing, and understanding.

nkseytkn ~ naq̣ṣilt
 the All; the people you travel with



Practice:
 Honour the voices of communities in decisions, ensuring relevance and reciprocity.

Elder teaching:
 “Recognise where I come from. Remember the ancestors.”
 Communication acknowledges both past and future generations.

- Recognize and acknowledge others - a nod, a smile, a greeting.
- Remember where you come from and honour your ancestors.
- Forgive, stay in the room until agreement can be reached, and practice consensus.
- Carry your story and share it - your story connects you to the People.

sneʔm ~ məyntẉix̣ẉ
 Song / Spirit



NVIT is an accountable and transparent organization.

Practice:
 Speak with honesty, document decisions, and follow through.

Elder teaching:
 Sometimes someone else helps you to see the spirit/song within you - Hear it.

- Talk to your spirit each day.
- Make decisions that protect and nurture your spirit.
- Help others care for their spirit.
- Choose which songs and teachings are yours, with discernment.
- Recognize when “everything runs smoothly” - balance and spirit are present.

q̣ẉəṃq̣ẉəmt ~ q̣ẉaṃ q̣ẉaṃt
 Balance / Beauty



Practice:
 Begin conversations by centering learners’ needs.

Elder teaching:
 “Listen to the story.”
 Each student and colleague carry knowledge that must be heard.

- Pride, confidence, and passion guide us.
- Knowing how much to give of yourself and how to take care of yourself is important.
- Leadership is energy that feels good, not forceful.
- Communication must foster peace, safety, security, and welcome.
- In every interaction, create space for dynamic energy that strengthens and uplifts.