

Attachment Hearts

How to make them step by step

Cora Fraleigh, BSW, RSW

Aboriginal Wellness Coordinator, Cariboo Friendship Society

The reasoning behind the Attachment Heart

- I have utilized the Attachment hearts in my practice to support kinship, connection and relationships for Aboriginal children, youth, families and communities.
- I have found that the hearts represent the relationship ties and connections that children and youth have with their caregivers: be it parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, foster, adoptive homes and other extended family members.
- Some of the mental health and wellness concerns that are addressed through the use of the Attachment Hearts are healthy connections with caregivers, dealing with separation anxiety, depression and sensory issues. Provided soft tactile material (flannel or fleece) for rubbing and fiddling with in your hands, after rubbing the scent of the Medicine is released while offering a moment to remember those who we are connected in order while children are away from their caregiver.
- Through the use of the hearts we share the importance of Traditional Aboriginal Medicines as a form of comfort and as a way to educate the children and youth of the use of the medicines. The Four Medicines: Sage, Cedar, Tobacco, Sweet grass and how they can be utilized in their holistic healing and wellness plans.

Template Size and Preferred Fabric



- On a piece of card stock (thicker paper that can be used so that we can use the template multiple times)
- Size of the heart template is approximately 3 ½ inches across and 3 ½ inches from top to bottom.
- I like to make my hearts out of flannel or a fleece to make the fabric soft so that children, youth and caregivers can rub the material to calm and release the smell of the traditional medicine that the heart is stuffed with.

How to cut out the Hearts

- You will need to cut the fabric into five inch strips.
- Place the cut out template, place it on the fabric (the fabric should still be folded in half [good side on the outside] like when it is cut off the bolt at the fabric store) there is no need to pre-wash the material.



Next Step...



- Cut out the Heart with a pair of zig zag scissors otherwise known as pinking shears, making sure to cut through both pieces of Fabric.

Next step...

Either sew by hand or machine around 75% of the heart, leaving an opening big enough to stuff with Traditional medicine.

For this example I choose to use sage, as it was offered to me by an Elder.



See the opening and the Sage in both a bundle
and loose...



Stuffing the Heart with Traditional Medicine & Sewing the opening closed.



Now prepare to present the heart to someone who is a friend, family member or caregiver to demonstrate your attachment to that person.



We must support health connections and attachments, start sharing the Orange Shirt Day Attachment Hearts.

This Slide show was prepared by Cora Fraleigh, BSW, RSW

Aboriginal Wellness Coordinator

Aboriginal Child and Youth Wellness Program

Cariboo Friendship Society, Williams Lake, BC.