



Reclaiming My Language: A Course for Silent Speakers **Information for Participants**

Our community is applying to First Peoples' Cultural Council to host a course for silent speakers of our language. The course is based on a successful program that was developed in Norway and Sweden for and by Indigenous Sami people. The goal of the course is to support silent speakers to overcome barriers to using their Indigenous language in their communities.

Who is a silent speaker?

A silent speaker is someone who has a good understanding of a language but does not speak it. There are many different kinds of silent speakers. Here are some examples:

- residential school survivors who spoke their language before attending school.
- people who grew up hearing a language and understand it but do not speak it.
- people who grew up with a fluent speaker in the home and understand the language but do not speak it.
- people who have studied extensively and have developed a high level of ability in reading and writing their language but do not speak it.
- speakers who moved away from the community for some time and do not feel comfortable speaking now that they have moved back.
- speakers who speak a different dialect of the same language and do not feel comfortable speaking within a community where another dialect is more common.
- speakers who simply haven't spoken for years because they haven't really had anyone to speak with.

Who is NOT a silent speaker?

- a new language learner.
- language learners with beginner or intermediate language proficiency.
- someone who lost their language abilities due to stroke or other health issues.
- a speaker who can speak comfortably in most situations.

What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy?

The course uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT is a proven psychological therapy that helps people change how they think about a situation (think=cognitive) in order to change their response (=behaviour) to a situation. **CBT is not a therapy meant to deal with trauma.** It is a short-term therapy designed to help people move forward with a specific goal. It has been used for a variety of things such as anxiety, phobias, quitting smoking or losing weight. In this case, CBT is used to help people speak their languages. Although the course uses CBT, this is **not** meant to imply that participants have a mental illness. CBT is simply a tool that can help people deal with a variety of everyday experiences, including speaking a language.



How long is the course?

- The course runs once a week for up to 3 hours per week for 10 weeks.
- If you sign up for the course, we strongly encourage you to commit to all 10 classes.
- You will also be required to meet with a language mentor once per week outside of class time.

What is involved?

- Participants will attend the class once per week.
- Participants will complete homework every week. There are two parts to the homework. First, you will complete a short reading. Second, you will meet with a fluent language speaker once per week for up to an hour. This will give you an opportunity to practice speaking one-on-one with a supportive mentor.
- Participants will have the option of doing a mini-internship for the last 4 weeks of the course. The internship involves spending time in an environment where you have the opportunity to hear and use language. For example, the internship could be in a language class at the school or in a language nest or daycare where language is used. You can just observe or you may choose to participate in activities. The internship is **optional**. If you participate in the internship, a criminal record check may be required in order to work with children under the age of 18. It will depend on the facility requirements.

What does it cost?

- The course is free.
- Participants will be paid an honourarium of \$30 for each class and \$30 for each mentorship session they attend. Participants are not paid for sessions they do not attend.
- Participants will be paid an honourarium of \$30 for up to 4 internship sessions if they decide to participate in the internship. Participants are not paid for sessions they do not attend.

Who is teaching the course?

The course will be led by a team of three people:

- A Co-Instructor Community Specialist will organize the course in the community. S/he will coordinate the course, connect participants with mentors and set up internships for participants.
- A Co-Instructor Mental Health Specialist will teach participants CBT skills to help them work on speaking their language.
- A Co-Instructor Language Specialist who works for First Peoples' Cultural Council will provide additional information by video every week and is FPCC's point of contact with the program.



Reclaiming My Language Pre-Course Survey

Each silent speaker participant is required to fill out a **Pre-Course Survey**. Provide a copy of the information above to potential participants. Make **10 copies** of this page and have the survey completed by **10 potential participants**. Upload surveys to the application. Survey information will be kept **CONFIDENTIAL**.

Do you think you are a silent speaker? You can reclaim your language!

What is your name: _____

What is your age: _____

There are many kinds of silent speakers. Please check the box or boxes that best describe you.

- I am a residential school survivor who spoke my language before attending school but no longer speak it.
- I grew up hearing my language and understand it but do not speak it.
- I grew up with a fluent speaker in the home and understand my language but do not speak it.
- I have studied a lot and have a high level of ability in reading and writing my language, but do not speak it.
- I moved away from the community for some time and do not feel comfortable speaking now that I am back.
- I speak a different dialect of the language in my community and do not feel comfortable speaking.
- I haven't spoken my language for years because I haven't really had anyone to speak with.

Check the box that best answers the question.	Not at all or never	Some or some of the time	Half or half of the time	Most or most of the time	All or all of the time	Does not apply
When people speak my language, I can understand.						
I can read my language.						
I can write my language.						
If you know how to speak a few words in your language, how often do you do it?						
If you know how to speak a few sentences in your language, how often do you do it?						
If you know how to have a whole conversation in your language, how often do you do it?						
I am comfortable speaking my language with one close friend or family member.						
I am comfortable speaking my language in a small group.						
I am comfortable speaking my language in public settings.						
I feel that I speak my language as much as I want to.						

On a scale from 1 to 9 (1 being low and 9 being high), how would you describe your proficiency: _____

Why do you want to reclaim your language?
