

Witness Role

Throughout the two days, witnesses will observe the panel presentations and discussions as well as move freely between the online breakout session conversation circles, listening for themes and provoking ideas.

At the end of the forum, the four witnesses will share a retelling and interpretation of what they felt, saw, and heard. Further, when a date for the second National Indigenous Identity Forum is selected, the four witnesses will be invited back to help open the forum with the knowledge and stories they carry from the first event.

The conference organizers will also share the witness stories in the forum summary report.

As you may know, witnessing is a form of Indigenous praxis for many Indigenous groups and can be conducted in many ways. At Stó:lō cultural gatherings, the Spokesman lets the guests know that it is time to pay attention to the activities by saying, “My dear ones, our work is about to begin.” Usually, the cultural work is witnessed by the guests through the oral tradition, which includes speech, story, and song. – Jo-Ann Archibald (2008). *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*, 3-4.