

## SESSION FOURTEEN: ANISHINABE BLANKET CEREMONY

As a means of bonding between parents and child, a blanket ceremony is conducted when the child begins to enter his/her change of life or rites of passage (puberty). The people say that this is a very powerful time in a child's life. Young boys' voices change. Young girls begin to follow the cycle of the moon.

The mother presents a blanket to her son at this time. From one corner of the blanket, the mother cuts off a piece which she will keep. She then tells the son, "In time you will be leaving your family to go out on your own. Throughout your lifetime you may carry this blanket to many places. But this piece will always be mine to hold. This will be an everlasting bond between us."

The father presents a blanket to his daughter at this time. A small piece is cut from one corner and is kept by the father and the same words are told to her: "In time you will be leaving your family to go out on your own. Throughout your lifetime you may carry this blanket to many places. But this piece will always be mine to hold. This will be an everlasting bond between us."

As parents, we must learn to build a strong bond with our children as they are growing up, but when they start to be young adults, we must also learn to let go. We will always want to protect and guide our children, even when they are adults, but we must also let them protect and guide themselves. This is how they will learn to be responsible and rely on themselves for the decisions that will be made.



\*From the Lac du Flambeau Family Circles AODA Prevention Program, Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin. Wording of blanket ceremony adapted from the Everlasting Bond Poem at Whitefish Bay Reserve, Whitefish Bay Ontario, Canada