

## Elders Gathering 2023 by Alex Jamieson



**Photo by Judith Schweers.** Here are the practitioners who participated in The Elders Gathering August 16 and 17, 2023. Missing: Mary Leslie. In all, 22 of us treated 237 First Nations participants over 2 days.

**O**ld men forget” is a famous line from Shakespeare’s *Henry V, about war*. Well, I am one old man who will not forget any of the 4 Elder’s Gatherings I have volunteered at so far...Here is a brief account of my experience this August, and I hope it reflects what other practitioners found too.

My hands go up to the peaceful women and men - Therapeutic Touch (TT) practitioners - who gave 2 days of their time for the elders. And a special thanks to Judith Schweers, who made it all come together.

Each conference has been unique, and the memories lasting. The sacred energy in the room begins when the practitioners come together beforehand to centre, ground, and connect with each other. We did this the day before the conference began, and on the morning of the first full day. The feeling is further enhanced by the spirit of the First Nations clientele as they enter.

This is a summary of my experience during 14 treatments, plus what I heard or observed over the course of 2 days in the healing room. The idea is to convey how we as energy facilitators fit into the picture. The practitioners and clients are all in the healing journey together, and we are all “relations” as described by Ojibwe poet Richard Wagamese, in his poem “All My Relations”. The practitioners are channelling energy to heal one heart at a time, and this is our best hope for reconciliation.

Various clients told us about their lives which included; abuse, family disfunction, car accidents, repetitive strain injuries, pain, addiction, poverty, incarceration, and promiscuity.

Let me give an example of a typical intention for healing:

“My intention was that she become pain - free, accepting the compassion and love offered in this room, and from another human being, using the energy of the present moment rather than reflecting on the hurt of the past. “ *Note, I didn't actually articulate all this, I just did what came to me at the moment.*

Most of our clients during the treatment phase of TT went into deep, sleep-like relaxation, eyes closed and still. After encouraging relaxation, completing various (other) techniques, and clearing pain, I would usually spend a while grounding them by holding their feet, allowing unwanted emotional energy to drain, then slowly releasing the feet. As I released, I would usually invite the angels, guides and spirits to continue to channel healing energy to the client. I touched the client's shoulder to bring them back. Sometimes I had to awaken the client (call the persons name) and explain that we needed the space for the next client. Their eyes would open wide and bewilderment changed to a broad smile.

**“Old men forget?”** Not the 3 old men who were practitioners at this gathering! Well, Joe Rahim and I are older than Daniel, and in fact, at dinner we celebrated Joe's 88th birthday, but he has certainly not forgotten how to offer TT!

