



BC Métis
FEDERATION

Michif Returning Home:

A Course for Silent Speakers Information for Participants

Project funding provided by:



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Summary

British Columbia Métis Federation is hosting a course for silent speakers of our Michif-French language. The course is based on a successful program developed in Norway and Sweden for and by Indigenous Sami People. The course was translated into English, brought to Canada by the First Peoples Cultural Council, and adapted for First Peoples Silent Speakers. We have adapted and adopted this for Métis people. The course aims to support silent speakers in overcoming barriers to using their Michif-French language in their homes and communities.

Who is a silent speaker?

A silent speaker is someone who has a good understanding of 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 residential school.
- » People who grew up hearing the 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 the language but do not speak it.
- » Speakers who moved away from their Métis community for some time and do not feel comfortable speaking now.
- » Speakers who speak a different dialect of the same language group of Michif-French and do not feel comfortable speaking within a community where another type of Michif-French is common.
- » Speakers who simply haven't spoken for years because they haven't really had anyone to speak it with to maintain it.

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 a stroke or other health issues.
- » A speaker who can speak comfortably in most situations.

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 be supported to meet with a language mentor once per week outside of class time.



Who 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 5 weeks of the course. The internship involves spending time in an environment where you have the opportunity to hear and use the language. For example, the internship could be in a language immersion setting in community with Mentor and Apprentice pairings. You can 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, with the option to transition into a language mentorship position.

Caring for Our Community:

- » The most important aspect of learning and sharing knowledge is community. Returning home language speakers and learners will be invited to share knowledge and care for one another within their ways of knowing and being - an empowering, strength-based approach to coming alongside the feelings that naturally arise as the process of language revitalization is undertaken. Sharing food, stories, music, and laughter will be central to the Michif Returning Home session gatherings and curriculum.

What does it cost?

- » The course is free.
- » Participants will be paid a daily honorarium for each in person group session attendance. You are not paid for sessions they do not attend.
- » If they decide to participate in the internship, you will be paid an additional honorarium for up to 5 internship sessions. However, you 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 at the BCMF Office in Vancouver. S/he will coordinate the course, connect participants with mentors and set up internships for participants.
- » A co-instructor Mental Health Specialist will share teachings around emotional health, cultural nourishment, and family/community health in support of the Michif Returning Home language speaking process.
- » A co-instructor Language Specialist who works with BC Métis Federation will provide additional information by video every week and is BCMF's point of contact with the program.



Pre-Course Survey

Each silent speaker participant is required to fill out a Pre-Course Survey.

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

Your Name: _____

Your Age: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

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

Check the box that best answers the question:

1. When people speak my language, I can understand.

- 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



2. I can read my language.

- 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

3. If you know how to speak a few words in your language, how often do you do it?

- 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

4. If you know how to speak a few sentences in your language, how often do you do it?

- 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

5. If you know how to have a whole conversation in your language, how often do you do it?

- 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



6. I am comfortable speaking my language in public settings.

- 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

7. I feel that I speak my language as much as I want to.

- 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

8. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being an absolute beginner and 10 being fully fluent), how would you describe your proficiency:

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Why do you want to reclaim your Michif-French Language?

If you are interested in participating in the **Michif Returning Home: Silent Speakers** course, please complete this assessment above and return it to **Marla Kylne** at:

MAP.Coordinator@BCMétis.com