

# AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES & BIG TOBACCO

Community Action Model

3/23/2023

5:30-7:00PM

PC: Natasha Zastko

Youth Leadership Institute

# AGENDA

- check in activity
- community building activity
- what is ceremonial tobacco?
- break / meditation
- brief history of Big Tobacco's effect on AI people
- connecting to our PSE change
- reflection activities
- evaluations
- closing activity

objectives: 1) learn about AI community's sacred tobacco practices and the harmful influence of the Big Tobacco Industry 2) practice group roles!





# CHECKING IN ON EACH OTHER

DEVELOPED BY KEILA LOPEZ SHE/HER

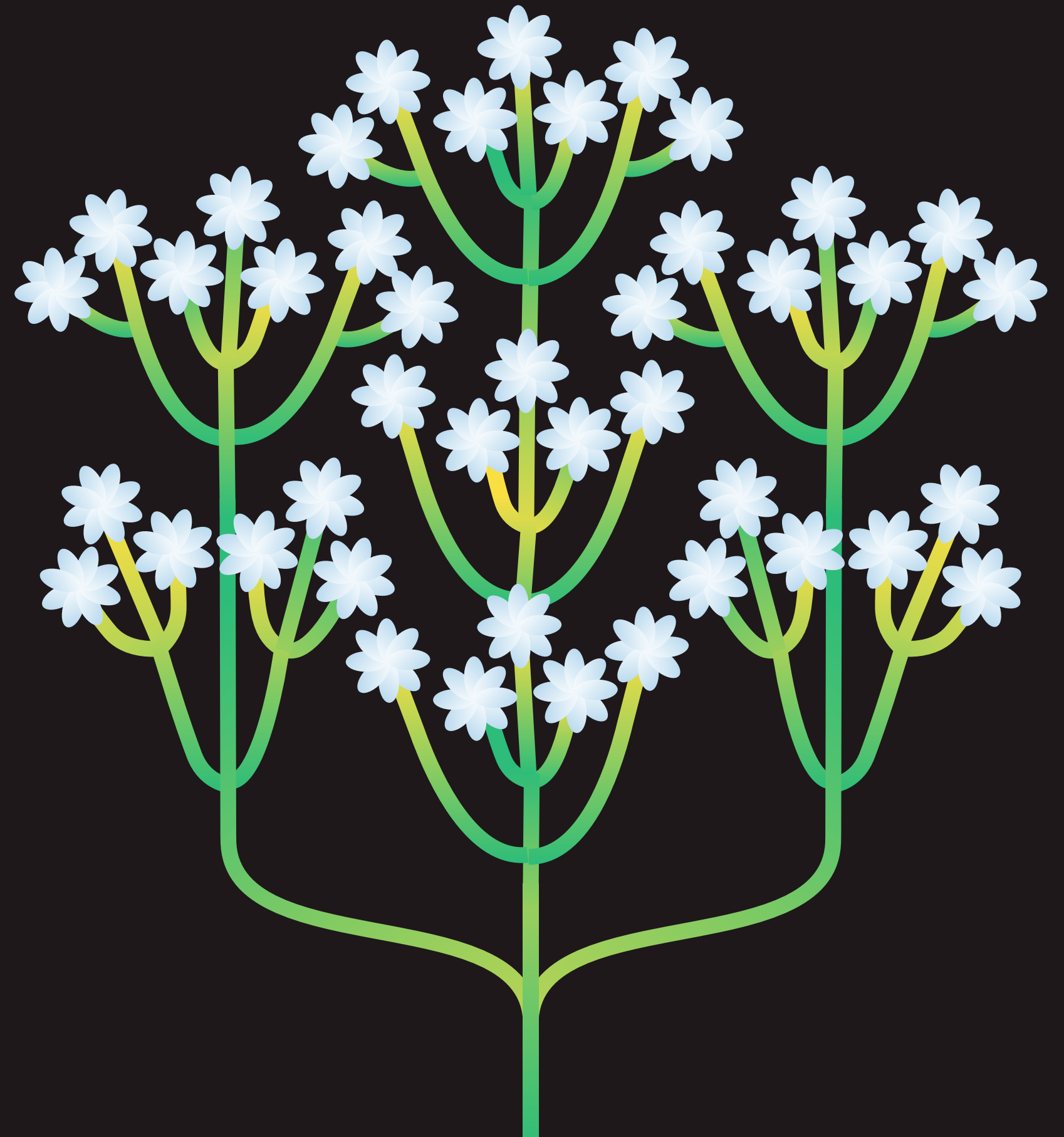
If you could be an ambassador for any kind of brand what would it be and if you could do a collaboration with an artist in creating a line of products who would it be?

# COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITY

FACILITATED BY PATRICIA DUANGCHAM SHE/HER

## 20 QUESTIONS:

we will use break out rooms for this activity. each person will think of a person, place, or thing. Their partner will have 20 questions to guess what it is! Then we will switch.



# SHOUT OUTS!

**KEILA:** I am so proud and grateful for Keila's persistence and determination! She has faced so much push back and complacency from all the folks she reached out to for her KIs. Despite everything she stayed positive and has completed her KI with UC Berkeley's Residential Director!

**GWEN:** Gwen has shown so much self-preservation, intention, and dedication throughout this cycle, but especially the past couple weeks! Really grateful for their contributions to today's workshop and for their inspiring communication and self-care skills.

**TATIANA:** Where would we be without our lead ECL. y'all? I deeply appreciate Tatiana's continuous drive, leadership, and warmth, all of which make this program stronger. She always makes time for CAM and shows immense dedication and care throughout our cycle, for me and for each of you.

**PATRICIA:** Patricia is always down to show up and be present and I can't say how valuable that is! She also always shows up as herself and is honest and true in everything she does. I appreciate how serious she takes this opportunity and the joy and compassion she offers to our team. Thank you Patricia!





# What is Ceremonial Tobacco?

FACILITATED BY GWEN PENALBER THEY/THEM

# CEREMONIAL TOBACCO

## **What is ceremonial tobacco and how is it used?**

Called “cansasa” (Dakota) or “asemaa” (Anishinaabek) by native tribes, Ceremonial tobacco is the traditional use of tobacco by indigenous/first nations tribes in manners of honor, with intended use to heal or give thanks.

It is one of the most commonly used medicinal plants, and considered to be the most sacred, connecting us to the spirit world. These are used in their original form of a tobacco plant by breaking off a few leaves or branches and are often mixed with other medicinal plants.



# CEREMONIAL TOBACCO

Indigenous people have been growing tobacco as far back as 12 thousand years ago.

Traditionally, in ritual ceremonies or individual use, ceremonial tobacco is used through smudging, where the dried leaves are burned and the smoke is “said to open the soul to allow the spirits to bring their healing powers and remove negative energy.”

Also, “In many rituals and ceremonies, the leaves are not burned, but either placed on the ground, or in the water while offering prayers of thanks and asking the spirits to take our fears, stresses or pain away.”





# CEREMONIAL TOBACCO



## **Do all tribes use ceremonial tobacco?**

Ceremonial Tobacco is usually only used among North American Indian Tribes (Excluding Alaska Natives)

## **What's the difference between ceremonial and commercial tobacco?**

Among many differences, ceremonial tobacco usually is not smoked, but sometimes could be burned in a pipe and not inhaled. The use of commercial tobacco is often targeted at even Native populations, leaving them to rely on these corporations for ceremonial tobacco use. Rather than using the raw, vibrant plant, commercial tobacco is a substance often mixed with harmful chemicals and made to be addictive in all of its forms (vape, chewing, cigars/cigarettes, etc) Meanwhile, ceremonial tobacco has no additives and is not addictive

# CEREMONIAL TOBACCO

**What are some issues AI tribes (particularly those who use/have used ceremonial tobacco) are facing?**

Cultural genocide and systemic oppression efforts on behalf of the United States government has left a majority of indigenous tribes without rights and access to their land and proper cultivation for them to be self-sufficient.

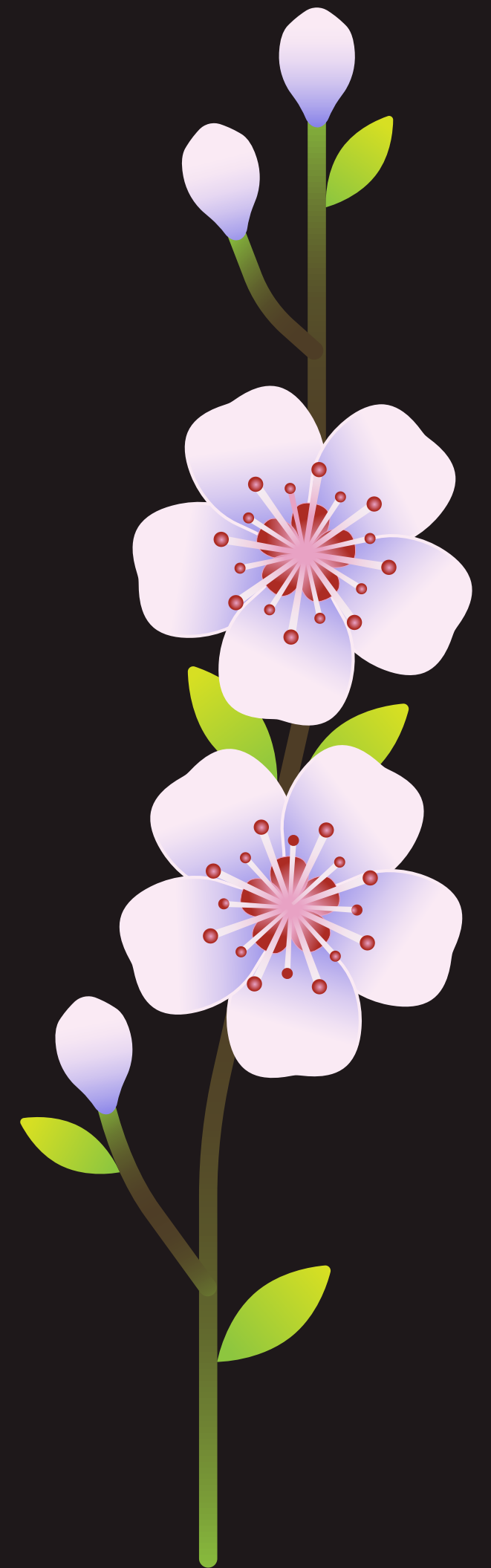
In 1883, The Indian Religious Crimes Code tried to end American Indian religion. This law “prohibited Native American ceremonial activity under pain of imprisonment.” Until 1978, Indigenous tribes were not allowed to practice their religion, so for decades, American Indians only had access to highly addictive and harmful commercial tobacco. This left large portions of Native American populations with tobacco addictions, and now commercial tobacco use is considered a driver of health inequities among American Indian populations.



# CEREMONIAL TOBACCO

## **How are AI tribes reclaiming their tribal traditions and addressing the harms of commercial tobacco?**

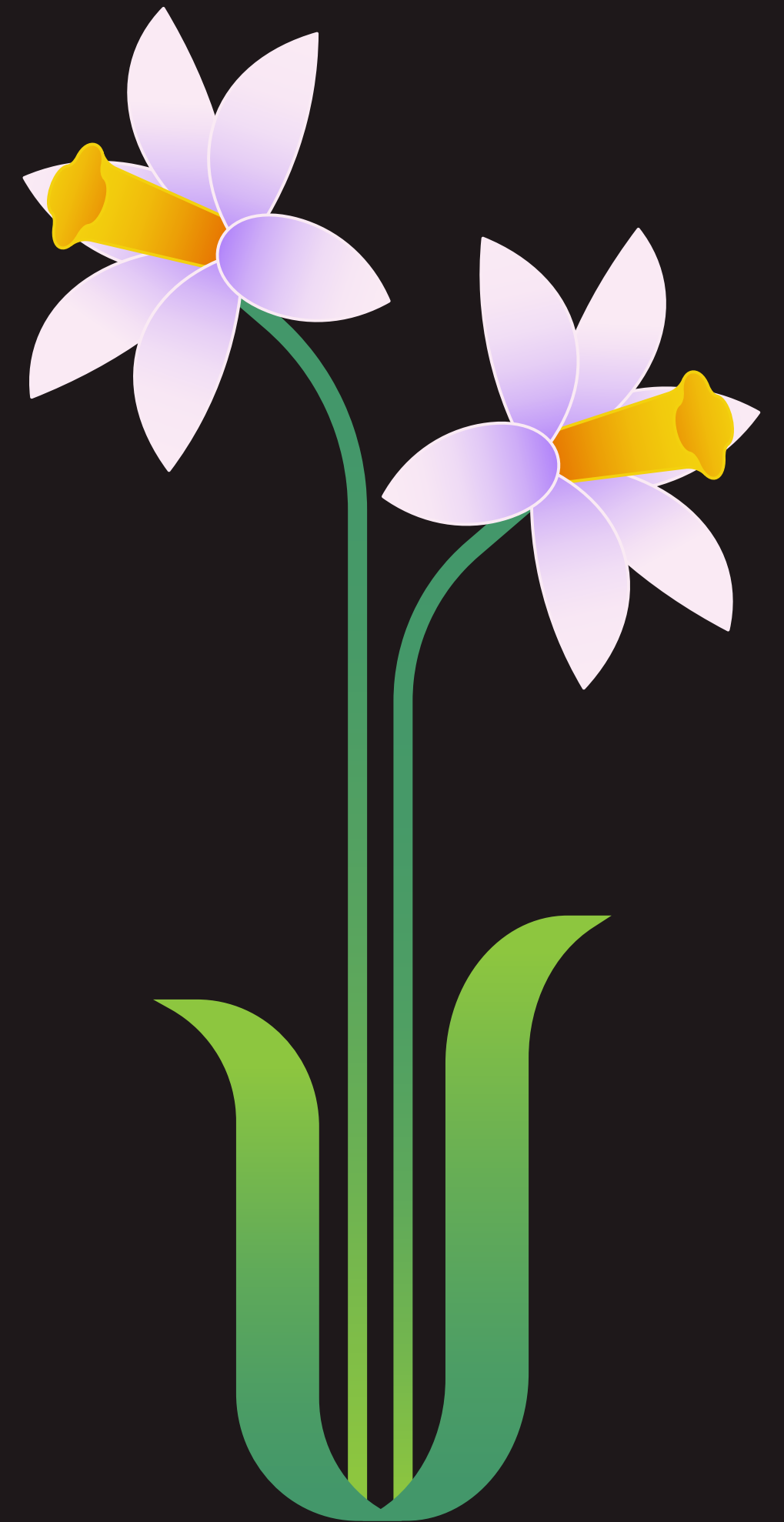
- Engaging communities with knowledge of cultural practices around traditional tobacco and the harms of commercial tobacco use
- Increasing access to traditional tobacco by growing and harvesting asemaa (Anishinaabek) and cąnsasa (Dakota) for ceremonial use
- Telling their own history of the origins and purpose of traditional tobacco to continue the tradition among American Indians and to educate non-natives
- Participating in the development of commercial tobacco treatment and cessation programming designed for American Indians



# CEREMONIAL TOBACCO

## Sources:

- <https://www.lung.ca/respecting-tobacco-ceremonial-vs-commercial-tobacco-use>
- <https://stopswithme.com/defining-sacred-tobacco-the-difference-between-ceremonial-use-and-commercial-tobacco/>
- <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/tobacco/traditional/index.html>





# TAKE A BREAK



# 5 MINUTES



# AMERICAN INDIANS AND BIG TOBACCO

## **California tribes**

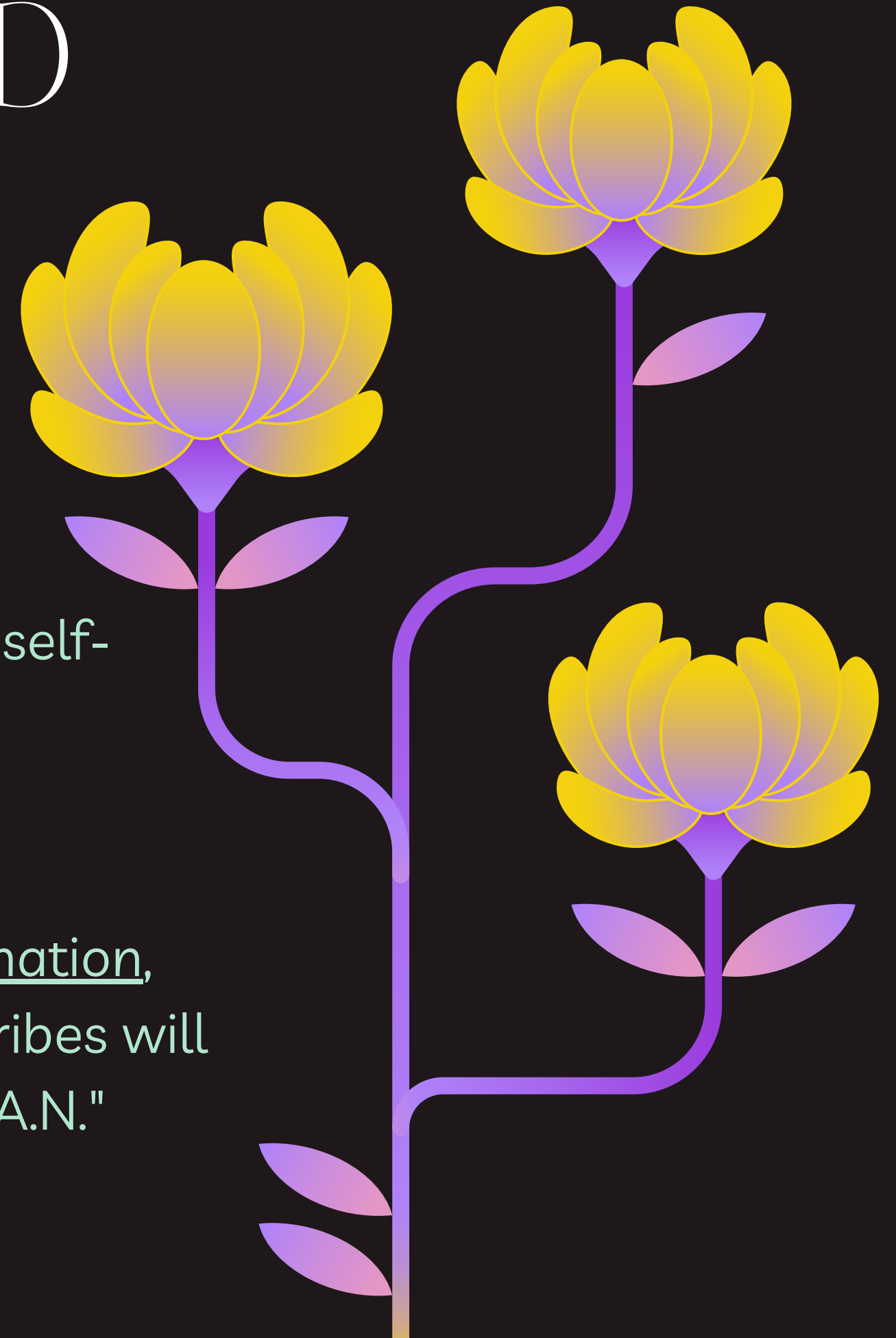
There are more than 100 federally recognized tribes in the state, and many more still fighting for recognition.

## **Sovereignty**

Each tribe is sovereign, which means they have the right to self-determination and self-governance, including laws/policies around tobacco.

## **Each tribe is unique**

While we often group them with language, each is its own nation, with its own government, cultural practices, etc. Different tribes will have different preferences around language, ie "tribe", "A.I./A.N."



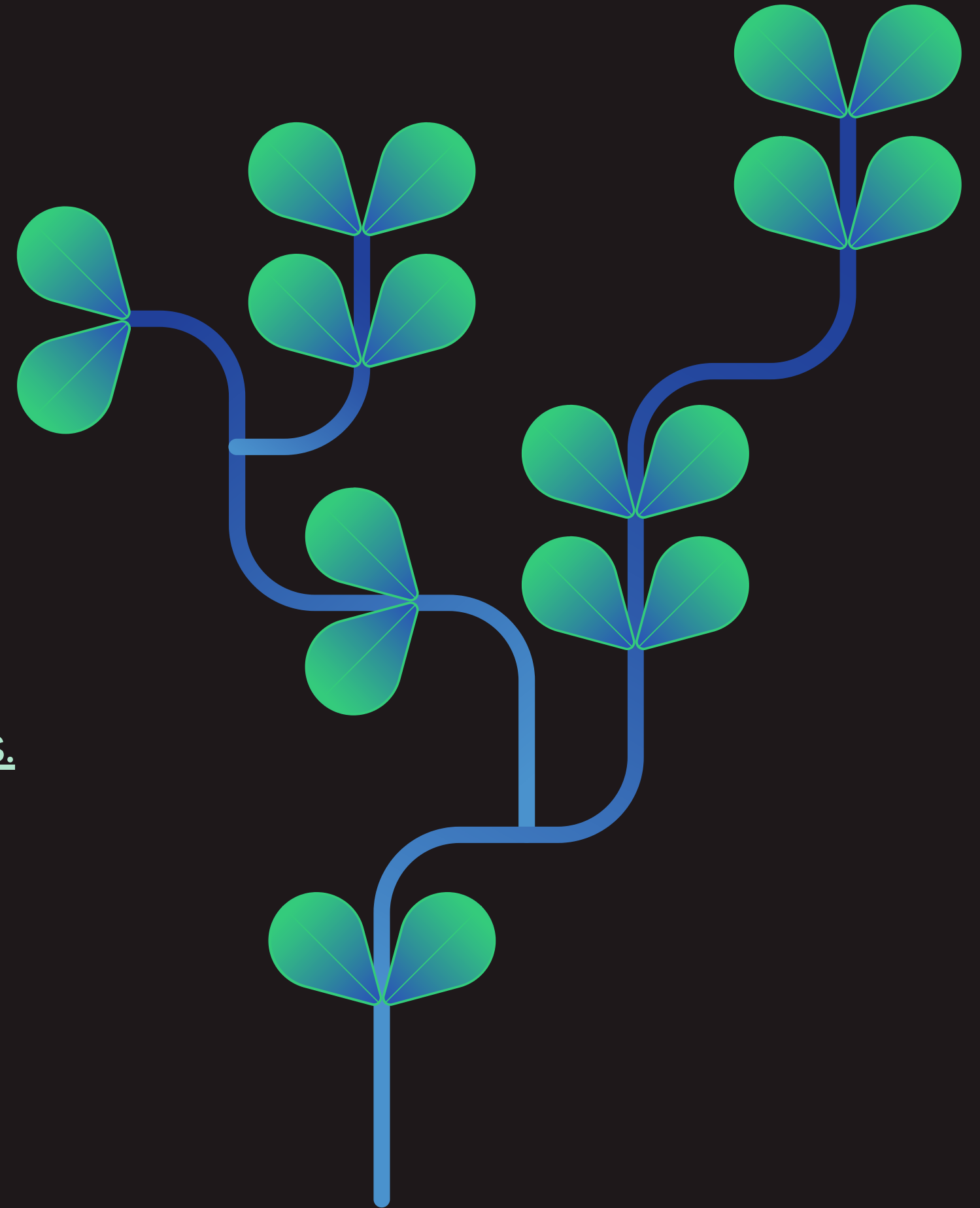
# BRIEF HISTORY

## Effects of colonization on ceremonial tobacco

Since ceremonial tobacco has no additives, is not designed to be harmful and has cultural and spiritual significance for many tribes.

Colonists essentially stole what was sacred, made it forbidden for tribes to use, added toxic chemicals to it, and began selling it for their own profits, simultaneously fueling predatory capitalistic practices.

Moreover, tribes who wished to continue tobacco practices were forced to use commercial tobacco exclusively, leading to cultural erasure, generational patterns of addiction, subsequent disease and death.



# CONNECTIONS TO SLAVERY



The high profitability of commercial tobacco led to tobacco plantations, which essentially started the "cash crop" model that led to the African slave trade. More labor was needed to farm plantations of tobacco (and ultimately other cash crops), so the history of the tobacco industry is built on slave labor.

The industry continues to target American Indian people and the rates of tobacco use among AI people are extremely high ranging at ~50% among adults. The tobacco industry preys on AI traditions, funding powwows and promoting brands like Natural American Spirit. They appropriate AI cultures to boost product sales and essentially poison this population, while pretending to show meaningful support for AI communities.

# THINKING ABOUT OUR PSE CHANGE

How could a Smoke Free  
Generation policy change  
affect tribal land and  
communities?



# REFLECTION

Please take a moment to reflect on today's session.

- What stood out for you?
- Is there something you want to learn more about?
- What feelings are coming up for you?

Share a word or phrase with the group that resonates with you or take a private moment for self-preservation.





# MORE RESOURCES

there is so much information out there, more than we can fit into a 40 minute workshop. here are resources to help educate yourself on this topic:

- <https://www.ca-tccc.org>
- <https://tobaccofreeca.com/story-of-inequity/american-indian/>
- <https://keepitsacred.itcml.org>
- <https://www.etr.org/ccap/>
- <https://americanindiancancer.org>
- <https://indigenouspeoplestf.org>

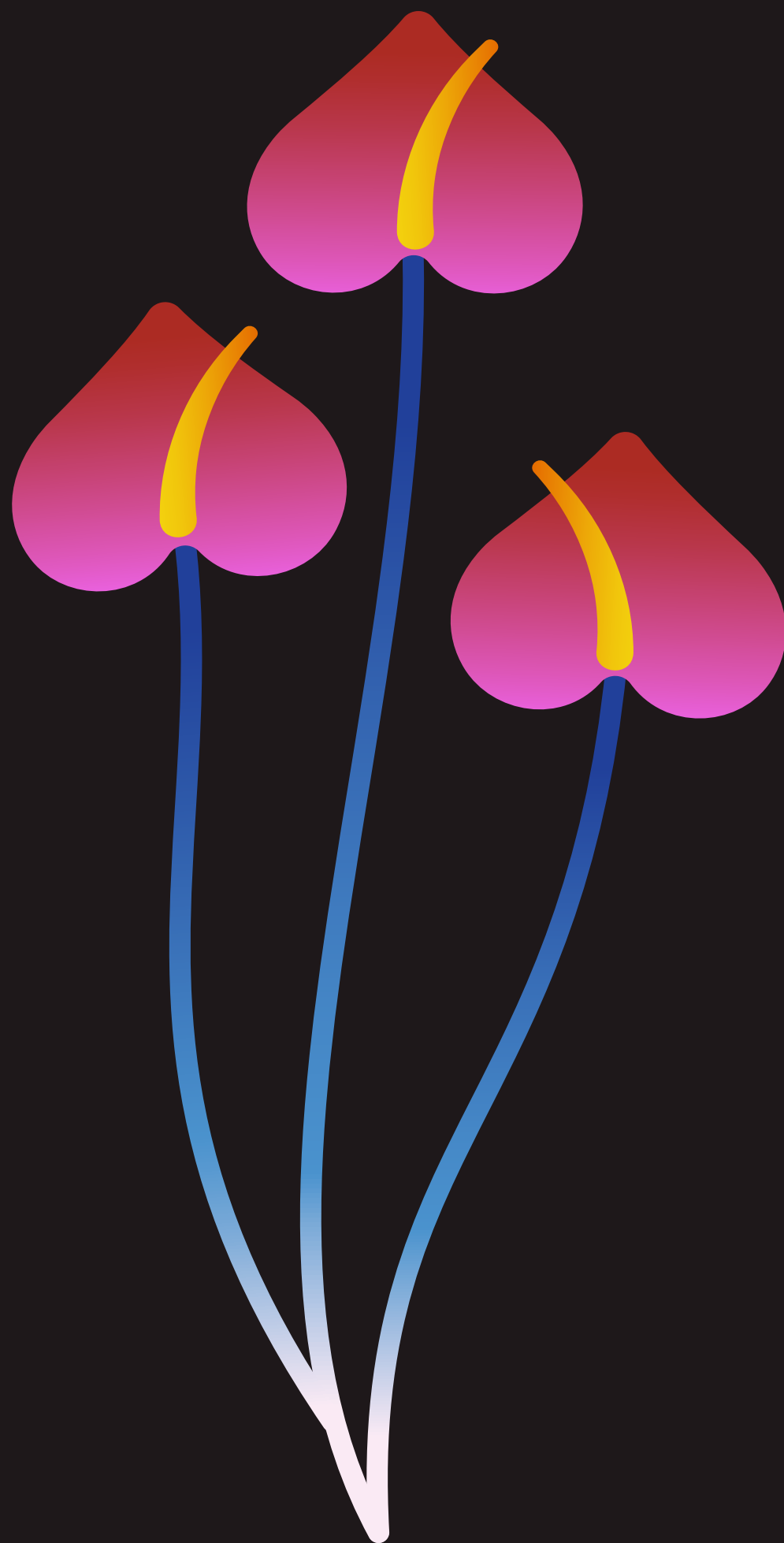


# REFLECTION

Please take a moment to reflect on Wednesday's interview with Supervisor Walton. Please share your thoughts with the team!

- What do you think went well?
- What do you think could have been better?
- What did you learn?
- What feelings are coming up for you?





# THIS WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT

We have entered the Spring season! Is your sleep schedule thrown off from daylight savings?

Insomnia Hack: Make sure to get at least 30 minutes of Vitamin D/sunshine every day, preferably in the AM (remember sunscreen).

We are also in the season of Data Analysis! Time to begin analyzing our KIs. Please keep a look out for my email tomorrow which will outline how to get started on this process this week.



# FEEDBACK IS A GIFT

please complete this  
required evaluation  
form:

[https://forms.gle/aLVc  
EGsFSjt8YBLr6](https://forms.gle/aLVcEGsFSjt8YBLr6)

1-3 minutes.



# CLOSING ACTIVITY

FACILITATED BY KEILA LOPEZ SHE/HER



How does your dream house look and what kind of aesthetic would you decorate it like?

Ex: Outdoors, minimalistic, cottage core, pink etc.