

THE FOUNDATION FOR SHAMANIC STUDIES

REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR PRACTITIONERS OF CORE SHAMANISM

June 1, 2019

The Foundation for Shamanic Studies is dedicated to the preservation, study, and teaching of shamanic knowledge for the welfare of the Planet and its inhabitants.

Started in 1979 as the Center for Shamanic Studies, the Foundation for Shamanic Studies offers internationally recognized training programs in shamanism and shamanic healing. They are based on the pioneering work of anthropologist [Michael Harner](#) (1929-2018) who brought shamanism to contemporary life in the West after extensive field and cross-cultural investigation, experimentation, and personal practice. He originated, researched, and developed [core shamanism](#), a system designed for Westerners to apply shamanism and shamanic healing successfully to their daily lives. This system is based upon the underlying universal, near-universal, and common features of shamanism—together with journeys to other worlds—rather than upon culture-specific variations and elaborations. For more about the Foundation’s work and the Harners see [The Way of the Shaman: The Work of Michael and Sandra Harner](#).

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PURPOSE

To provide requirements and standards of practice for shamanic practitioners in order to promote the authentic, effective, and beneficial application of core shamanic healing methods for the welfare of individuals, communities, and the planet.

OVERVIEW: REQUIREMENTS FOR PRACTICING CORE SHAMANIC HEALING

1. Training in authentic, effective, and time-tested core shamanic healing methodologies, including hands-on practice
2. Training in ethical standards of practice specifically applicable to shamanic healing

DEFINITIONS-PARAMETERS

See also FAQ: <https://shamanism.org/workshops/faq.php> and [Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone](#)

What is a shamanic practitioner/shaman?

"While the work of shamans encompasses virtually the full gamut of known spiritual practices, shamanism is universally characterized by an intentional change in consciousness (Eliade's 'ecstasy') to engage in purposeful two-way interaction with spirits [wise, benevolent, and compassionate helping beings]. Its most distinctive feature, which is not universal, is the out-of-body journey to other worlds." . . . What all shamans "do share is disciplined interaction with spirits in nonordinary reality to help and to heal others." . . . "Both in traditional indigenous settings and in contemporary society, shamans work within a holistic framework. They address the spiritual side of illness in a complementary relationship with the nonspiritual treatment of illness and injury." Michael Harner, *Cave and Cosmos*, p. 48. See also, [Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone](#).

A note about degrees/certifications: The Foundation does not offer degrees or certify students as shamans. It is not possible for an organization or individual to “certify” that a person is a shaman since it is successful results in shamanic healing that make a person a shaman. If a person consistently helps others through shamanic healing, that person may be recognized by clients as a shaman or shamanic

healer. Because it is the fully compassionate helping spirits that provide the power for healing, even that status can change at any time according to a practitioner's relationship with their helping spirits. However, the Foundation offers “certificates of *completion*” to publicly acknowledge the considerable time and effort invested by students in the completion of the Foundation's training programs in advanced shamanism and shamanic healing.

[What is shamanism?](#)

From [Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone](#) by Michael Harner:

- The word "shaman" in the original Tungus language refers to a person who makes journeys to “nonordinary” reality in an altered state of consciousness. Although the term is from Siberia, the practice of shamanism existed on all inhabited continents.
- After years of extensive research, Mircea Eliade, in his book, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, concluded that shamanism underlays all the other spiritual traditions on the planet, and that the most distinctive feature of shamanism—but by no means the only one—was the journey to other worlds in an altered state of consciousness.
- Shamans are often called "see-ers" (seers), or "people who know" in their tribal languages, because they are involved in a system of knowledge based on firsthand experience. Shamanism is not a belief system. It's based on personal experiments conducted to heal, to get information, or do other things. In fact, if shamans don't get results, they will no longer be used by people in their tribe. People ask me, "How do you know if somebody's a shaman?" I say, "It's simple. Do they journey to other worlds? And do they perform miracles?"

[What is core shamanism?](#)

Core Shamanism consists of the universal, near-universal, and common features of shamanism, together with journeys to other worlds, a distinguishing feature of shamanism. As originated, researched, and developed by Michael Harner, the principles of Core Shamanism are not bound to any specific cultural group or perspective.

Shamanic Healing Methods

See [Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone](#).

For more about shamanic healing methods written in a format especially intended for health care professionals, which also introduces the general reader to some important aspects of core shamanism in connection with healing work, see [Cave and Cosmos: Shamanic Encounters with Another Reality](#) by Michael Harner, © 2013 The Foundation for Shamanic Studies (North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA), Appendix D, Core Shamanism and Healing: Information for Physicians and Health Professionals

TRAINING: AUTHENTIC AND EFFECTIVE SHAMANIC HEALING METHODOLOGIES

See FSS Shamanic Training guide: <https://shamanism.org/workshops/shamanic-training-getting-started.pdf>

The FSS curriculum, provided through our [workshops and advanced residential programs](#), is designed to provide step-by-step training in shamanic methods. Workshops are taught by the Foundation's highly qualified international faculty. [FSS faculty members](#) have completed a rigorous training program in core shamanism and have several years of hands-on shamanic healing practice with private clients.

The Foundation's authentic and powerful training in shamanic methods provides the basis for an effective shamanic practice. To practice successfully, in addition to the methodology, one must build strong connections with the helping spirits. These connections develop in strength over time through

disciplined training and experience. The Foundation does not grant diplomas or certify that a person is a “shaman” – only the effective practice, deriving from knowledge and power provided by the helping spirits, can make one a shaman. The FSS does, however, provide [certificates of completion](#), confirming a student’s participation in Foundation trainings. Traditional [continuing education credits](#) are also available.

Ultimately, we have found that success as a shamanic practitioner is dependent upon:

1. Developing spiritual power through working with the compassionate helping spirits over a period of time;
2. A disciplined and ethical application of the core shamanic healing methods taught in the workshops and trainings under the guidance of one’s own helping spirits.

Shamanic Healing Required Training:

1. [**Way of the Shaman® -- the Basic**](#)

This weekend workshop initiates participants into the classic shamanic journey experience and introduces students to divination and healing methods. After taking the Basic, students will know how to journey to their own helping spirits and build relationships with them, typically in order to gain knowledge and, when trained, to bring back help and healing. **The Basic is the prerequisite for all other trainings.** Once the Basic is completed the workshops below may be taken in any order, though as noted, some of the workshops require additional prerequisites.

2. **Advanced Workshops in Shamanic Healing Methods**

The following weekend workshops teach and provide hands-on practice in the primary healing modalities used in core shamanism.

- a. [Shamanic Extraction Healing Training](#)—extraction of localized spiritual intrusions.
- b. [Shamanism, Dying, & Beyond](#)—psychopomp work, shamanic perspectives on death.
- c. [Power Soul Retrieval™](#)—returning lost soul portions.
Prerequisites: the Basic, PLUS both Extraction Healing and Dying & Beyond
- d. [Advanced Shamanic Healing Practice](#)—a review of the primary healing modalities, plus practice in putting it all together in a client session. *Prerequisites:* Completion of a, b, and c above, or the Two Week Shamanic Healing Intensive.

3. [**Two Week Shamanic Healing Intensive™**](#) (advanced, residential)—this training includes training in the primary shamanic healing methods (workshops 2a, 2b, 2c), the Dream Dance, as well as profound initiatory experiences. Students may take the workshops in section 2a, b, c or this training. Many students complete the training in both the residential and weekend formats.

4. [**Three Year Program of Advanced Initiations in Shamanism & Shamanic Healing™**](#) (advanced residential)—ever-deepening shamanic initiatory experiences designed to advance participants' knowledge, practice, and spiritual connections and power as far as possible over the course of three years. Not required to begin a shamanic healing practice, but highly effective at developing participants’ relationships with the helping spirits and increasing their own spiritual power for healing.

ETHICAL PRACTICE OF SHAMANIC HEALING

Visit FSS website: <https://shamanism.org/resources/ethics-legal.html>

- [Code of Ethics of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies](#) (PDF)
- [Ethical Considerations in Shamanic Healing](#) (article) by Susan Mokolke, JD
- [Unified Code of Ethics for Healers](#). The Council for Healing is a network of individual healers and healing organizations whose mission is to promote understanding of healing and advance access to healing.

[Shamanism in Practice: Ethical, Effective, and Inspired Shamanic Healing](#)—a workshop for those seeking to more effectively use their shamanic training for healing. Engage with other shamanic practitioners and the helping spirits in the real-world aspects of an inspired practice, and take a look at important ethical and legal considerations. This two-day training includes:

- The ethical practice of shamanic healing, including issues of permission and consent specific to shamanic healing, as well as generally accepted standards of practice
- A look at legal considerations (not legal advice)
- Practical matters such as payment for services, useful forms to have on hand, malpractice insurance, and more
- How to describe your shamanic services and training, talk with clients, and screen potential clients
- Creating a safe and inspiring healing space that supports you and your clients
- Follow through after healing sessions

Personal/Business Issues

Malpractice insurance

Bio: training and experience

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

FSS website: <https://shamanism.org>

- About Core Shamanism: <https://shamanism.org/workshops/coreshamanism.html>
- “Shamanic Healing, We Are Not Alone” by Michael Harner: <https://shamanism.org/articles/article01.html>
- Shamanic training: <https://shamanism.org/workshops/index.php>
- Ethical and Legal Considerations for Shamanic Healers: <https://shamanism.org/resources/ethics-legal.html>
- Documentary about the Foundation’s work: [The Way of the Shaman: The Work of Michael and Sandra Harner](#).
- *Cave and Cosmos: Shamanic Encounters with Another Reality* by Michael Harner, © 2013 The Foundation for Shamanic Studies (North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA). See Appendix D, “Core Shamanism and Healing: Information for Physicians and Health Professionals.”
- *The Way of the Shaman* by Michael Harner © 1980, 1990 Michael Harner (HarperCollins, New York, NY).

Susan Mokolke

President

The Foundation for Shamanic Studies

<https://shamanism.org>

info@shamanism.org