

The Contemporary Practice of Shamanic Healing

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Shamanism and Shamanic Healing

Shamanism might be considered the world's oldest spiritual practice. Over tens of thousands of years our ancient ancestors used shamanic methods to contact sources of wisdom and power – not just to benefit themselves, but to bring healing, knowledge, and practical wisdom to their peoples. The word “shaman” (pronounced SHAH-mahn) comes from the Tungusic-speaking peoples of Siberia and north China. It generally indicates a person who is able, in an altered state – most often achieved through rhythmic percussion sound or sonic driving – to leave his or her body and travel to other realms to interact with spirits. Shamanism is a holistic healing method and shamans in both indigenous and contemporary settings address the spiritual side of illness and injury in a complementary relationship with nonspiritual treatments.

Shamanic healing is a spiritual healing practice and training alone does not make one a shaman.

"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?'"

–Michael Harner

"Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone"

<http://www.shamanism.org/articles/article01.html>

Do I need a “credential”?

You do not need a degree or other credential. It is not possible to “certify” a person as a shaman, as successful shamanic healing depends on the power of and relationship with one's compassionate helping spirits—a relationship which is carefully cultivated by the individual practitioner through training and experience. However, good shamanic healers are typically mature with substantial life experience, conscientious, compassionate, ethical, and grounded. They are interested in helping people, as well as animals and the natural world. Most have successful careers in other disciplines, including the medical profession, business, alternative healing, and psychology. Typically, because it is an intense spiritual healing practice requiring much from its practitioners, the number of clients that can be effectively treated per day is limited. Thus, as with indigenous shamans of the past who had roles in their villages as hunters, artisans, caretakers, etc., contemporary shamanic healers often have professions in addition to their shamanic practice.

How can I find a training course?

Started in 1979 as the Center for Shamanic Studies, the Foundation for Shamanic Studies (FSS) presents the world's foremost 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 in their daily lives and to help others. 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. A complete description and schedules of FSS training programs can be found at www.shamanism.org under the Workshops tab (<http://www.shamanism.org/workshops/index.php>).

Download [Shamanic Training – Getting Started](https://shamanism.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ShamanicTrainingFSS-GettingStarted.pdf), for a guide to FSS training programs. (<https://shamanism.org/news/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/ShamanicTrainingFSS-GettingStarted.pdf>)

What do I need to set up a practice and roughly what will my costs be?

Get the best training you can and practice what you have learned. When you feel ready, set up a private space to offer shamanic healing one-on-one to clients. Some practitioners do this from their homes, some have a private office space. The major costs for practitioners are for high-quality training. Costs vary considerably for setting up one's healing space and depend on the practitioner's resources and personal preference. All that is required is a private, quiet, simple space with room enough for two people (10 x 10 square feet would be sufficient). Shamanic practitioners typically have one or more drums and rattles, and whatever other spiritual/natural objects/tools they have gathered through their training and practice.

What is the best way to attract clients?

Get the best training you can and achieve success with clients. If one begins to have success using shamanic healing with clients, then word-of-mouth will bring you all the clients you need. There are also many online websites where one can list shamanic healing services (alternative healing sites). The Foundation for Shamanic Studies also lists, without endorsement as a service to the public and the FSS membership, those who have shamanic healing practices and what advanced training they have had with the FSS (<http://www.shamanism.org/resources/services.php>).

Shamanic healing services can be marketed just as one would market other alternative healing practices, though a clear description of what shamanic healing is needs to be provided.

The Foundation for Shamanic Studies also offers a weekend workshop, which addresses some of the ethical and legal considerations and provides practical tools for a shamanic healing practice: Shamanism in Practice: Ethical, Effective, and Inspired Shamanic Healing™ (http://www.shamanism.org/workshops/calendar.php?Wkshp_ID=35).

For information on shamanism and training in core shamanic healing, visit the Foundation for Shamanic Studies website: shamanism.org. Email: info@shamanism.org

Books:

Cave and Cosmos: Shamanic Encounters with Another Reality by Michael Harner
<http://www.shamanism.org/CaveandCosmos.html>

The Way of the Shaman by Michael Harner
<http://www.shamanism.org/products/bk101.html>

Documentary film:

The Way of the Shaman: The Work of Michael and Sandra Harner
<https://shamanism.org/way-of-the-shaman/documentary.php>

Articles:

"Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone"

An Interview of Michael Harner by Bonnie Horrigan

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<http://www.shamanism.org/articles/article01.html>

"Why Study Core Shamanism?"

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<http://www.shamanism.org/articles/article15.html>

"Core Shamanism and Daily Life"

by Susan Mokolke

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<http://www.shamanism.org/articles/core-shamanism-daily-life.html>

"Ethical Considerations in Shamanic Healing"

by Susan Mokolke

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<http://www.shamanism.org/articles/ethics.html>