

Yéil Koowú Shaawát (Raven Tail Woman) Women's Group

# Facilitator's Guide

**PHASE I: ANGER, STRESS, AND COMMUNICATION**

*A 12-Week Curriculum for Native Women*

2022



Center for  
Native Child  
and Family Resilience



## Yéil Koowú Shaawát Women's Group

### **Tlingit and Haida's Community & Behavioral Services Healing Center – Our Values:**

We value treating the whole person (mind, body, spirit) and acknowledging deep connection to Tribal values, land and relationships with others including family, clan and Tribe while preserving our culture and way of life, known as "Haa Kusti" among the Tlingit and "Tlagw íitl' xíinangaa Gíidang" among the Haida.

### **Yéil Koowú Shaawát Vision of Success:**

Through generational healing, empower women and families to lead and live healthy lives, strengthen family bonds, and raise strong, resilient children, while embracing Tribal values and culture to create a new life experience for ourselves and future generations.

Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska  
Tribal Family & Youth Services  
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# Organization of the Facilitator's Guide

The Yéil Koowú Shaawát Curriculum Facilitator's Guide consists of an introduction and three volumes:

- Introduction
- **Phase I: Anger, Stress, and Communication**
- Phase II: Personal and Family Development
- Phase III: Sexual Abuse Talking Circle (SATC)

This volume provides facilitation guidance for Phase I of the curriculum. Each lesson includes:

- **Lesson Purpose** – The purpose of the lesson, which should be read to participants at the beginning of each lesson
- **Objectives** – Group learning objectives
- **Materials** – A list of meeting materials for each lesson
- **Handouts** – A list of handouts for each lesson
- **Lesson Guidance** – A step-by-step outline for delivering the lesson, including suggested timeframes for lesson components to help facilitators plan their use of time and keep lessons on track
- **Tips/Suggestions** – Tips and suggestions for each lesson based on the facilitation experiences of the curriculum developer
- **Resources** – Additional content that may be useful, including a) written and Web-based materials for use in lessons, b) supplementary materials that facilitators can use in lessons at their discretion, and c) materials for facilitator review to provide background information on lesson topics
- **Space for Notetaking** – Space for handwritten notes, should users print this guide or individual lessons

When a large selection of lesson text is italicized, this indicates that the facilitator may read this text to participants as written.



## Yéil Koowú Shaawát Curriculum

## Phase I: Anger, Stress, and Communication

The goal of Phase I is to provide education and support around the issues of anger and stress, communication, loss, and grief. Forgiveness and letting go.

### Purpose

Phase I works on the building blocks of communication (including expression, discussion, and negotiation skills), conflict resolution, anger management, and problem-solving skills. It addresses stress reduction, the physiology of anger, the cycle of violence, anger as a secondary emotion, societal anger, and more. The issues of alcoholism, addiction, and domestic violence are interwoven into the curriculum's phases, as these are pertinent intergenerational issues that are stifling and undermining Native people. Phase I is delivered as one lesson each week for 12 weeks.

### Group Outcomes

The goal of Phase I is for participants to:

- Learn constructive, healthy ways to deal with anger and stress.
- Better understand the roots of one's anger.
- Understand that there are primary and secondary emotions and anger is a secondary emotion.
- Learn the different ways of processing anger and other feelings.
- Understand the cycle of violence and learn ways to end the cycle.
- Understand that anger is a learned behavior.
- Learn the value of time-outs, breathing, and other calming physical and mental exercises.
- Understand the body's physiological response to anger and fear.
- Process and share anger issues and feelings in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Understand the familial and cultural aspects that contribute to harboring anger.
- Learn the value of physical, health, wellness, and good nutrition in working with feelings.
- Understand the importance of forgiveness and letting go in the process of healing.

### Lessons Overview

Lesson 1 begins the curriculum by orienting participants to the program and the group; topical lessons follow. The table below outlines the major topics covered in each Phase I lesson.

LESSONS	MAJOR TOPICS
1. Introduction/Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Group Guidelines and Expectations</li> <li>▪ Cultural and Spiritual Components of Healing</li> </ul>
2. Cycle of Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cycle of Violence</li> <li>▪ Cycle of Anger</li> <li>▪ Anger Scale</li> <li>▪ Relationship Abuse</li> <li>▪ Locus of Control</li> </ul>
3. Physiology of Anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tools in Understanding Anger</li> <li>▪ Brain Anatomy and the Physiology of Anger</li> <li>▪ How Stress Affects the Body</li> <li>▪ Fight, Flight, or Freeze Response</li> </ul>
4. Our Parents/Ourselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Behavioral Responses to Negative Emotions</li> <li>▪ Anger as a Learned Behavior</li> <li>▪ Trauma Gram</li> <li>▪ Purification Ceremony</li> <li>▪ Talking Circle Guidelines</li> </ul>
5. Film Related to Anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Using Film to Identify Personal Anger Issues</li> <li>▪ Using the Film's Characters as Inspiration for Self-Reflection</li> </ul>
6. Communication Styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Healthy Communication Styles</li> <li>▪ Assertiveness</li> <li>▪ Stress Relief</li> </ul>
7. Societal Anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Historical Trauma</li> <li>▪ Cultural Identity</li> </ul>
8. Anger as a Secondary Emotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Lessons 2–7</li> <li>▪ Primary and Secondary Emotions</li> <li>▪ Communicating Primary Feelings With "I" Statements</li> </ul>
9. Healthy and Unhealthy Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Virginia Satir's Patterns of Communication</li> <li>▪ Single-Level and Double-Level Messaging</li> </ul>
10. Hurt, Pain, and Sadness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Lessons 4 and 8</li> <li>▪ The Importance of Processing Our Pain and Suffering</li> </ul>
11. Forgiveness and Letting Go	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review of Lesson 9</li> <li>▪ The Importance of Forgiveness and Letting Go</li> </ul>
12. Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Graduation Ceremony</li> </ul>

# Lesson 1 – Introduction/Orientation



## Lesson Purpose

The first of the Four Sacred Laws states that, “Change comes from within; in order for anything to grow and change, it must struggle; struggle is not bad—be grateful.” The goal of the first lesson is to begin creating an environment that promotes a feeling of safety and comfort for group participants. The lesson will help participants learn that processing events and feelings is critical to healing. Healing is messy work but necessary for growth and change. Participants will learn the benefits of self-examination, introspection, and reflection. This lesson establishes the group’s tone, group and program guidelines, and participant expectations and responsibilities. You, the facilitator, will introduce yourself, and the participants introduce themselves to each other. In time, participants will come to feel comfortable enough to share their feelings and personal issues and develop trust with other group participants. This lesson also introduces concepts around the cultural and spiritual components of healing, the Medicine Wheel, and the Four Directions.

Past groups have gathered at the meeting location to eat dinner together before group meetings. This is not required, but it is recommended. Group dinners have demonstrated value for making introductions and building group camaraderie.

## Objectives

- Meet the facilitator and other group members and begin developing trust and rapport.
- Learn the group and program guidelines and participant expectations and responsibilities.
- Learn about the importance of cultural and spiritual components of healing.

## Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet<sup>1</sup>
- Binders or Folders for Participants
- Facilitator Introduction Notes
- Organizational or Tribal Statement of Values
- Reading on the Meaning and Sources of Anger

<sup>1</sup> A sample attendance log can be found in the Appendix.





- Diagram of Medicine Wheel
- Medicine Wheel Video (optional)
- Selection for Closing Reading
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Handouts

- “The Circle” Passage
- Group Consent and Intake Forms<sup>2</sup>
- Information Gathering Questionnaire (optional)
- Group Guidelines and Expectations
- 12-Week Treatment Syllabus

## Lesson Guidance

### 1. Welcome and Introductions (60 minutes)

#### A. Welcome (5 minutes)

**Welcome** participants to the group and thank them for coming. Attending the first session is a big step for participants—show appreciation.

**Invite** participants to seat themselves in a circle (when meeting in person). When meeting virtually, ask participants to turn on their web camera.

**Take attendance.** Call out participants’ names to take attendance. Mark attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, you may have participants use a sign-in sheet to take attendance.

**Distribute binders or folders** for participants to store the handouts and materials they receive throughout Phase I.

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<sup>2</sup> A sample group consent form, intake form, treatment syllabus, and information gathering questionnaire can be found in the Appendix. There are two versions of the group intake form. One is titled “Group Intake Form”. The other is titled “Group Therapy Screening”.

## EXAMPLE FACILITATOR SELF INTRODUCTION

### By Amalia Monreal

Welcome everyone. Thank you again for coming.

I want to formally introduce myself. I am Yaqui Indian. Yaquis are indigenous to Mexico, although we do have a reservation in Tucson, Arizona. Much of my Native teachings about healing and cultural practices I've learned from many teachers, several while I worked for an organization in Seattle called the United Indians of All Tribes Foundation. I am honored to be able to share my Native American culture with you, my circle of life, especially as it relates to traditional Native American spiritual healing practices and what I have been taught. I do not wish to offend anyone, and I apologize if I say anything that might hurt anybody. It is not my intention to hurt any of you.

I am learning from you as I am still learning Tlingit ways and I am humbled to be able to share my culture with you. I was adopted into the Dog Salmon Clan of the Raven Moiety. I have two Tlingit names, X'aa aan Tlaa, which means mother of the land in this area. I was also given the name Yéil Koowú Shaawát by the Lewis family from Haines/Klukwan, Chikoot Tribe, which means "Raven Tail Woman". The Áak'w Kwáan are the original settlers of Auke Bay. I am from the Yaxte Hit (Big Dipper House). I continue to learn some of the sacred ceremonies of our clan, such as the "protection ceremony" and dipping. I am humbled to be a student and honored to be adopted by the Dog Salmon Clan. I continue to learn about traditional Southeast Alaska Native ceremonies, traditions, and culture during our time together in this group.

## B. Facilitator Introduction (10 minutes)

**Introduce yourself to participants.** You may refer to the example self-introduction by Amalia Monreal above. We recommend that you share the following information about yourself, depending on your comfort level:

- Tribal affiliation
- Clan/Band/House
- Where you are from
- Where you grew up
- Anything you want to say about your family or where you were raised
- Why you are interested in leading this group

**Co-facilitators** may also introduce themselves at this time.

## C. "The Circle" Reading (5 minutes)

**Read "The Circle" passage.** Read this passage in each of the first three lessons of Phase I to help participants understand the importance of confidentiality. Facilitators may also wish to print copies of the passage for sharing with participants.

## THE CIRCLE

By Amalia Monreal

The circle that you (we) create is sacred. The only way that a circle can be destroyed is from the inside out, from within itself. If any one of you break the circle by breaking the confidentiality of the others, you will be brought back to the circle and be held accountable not only to Amalia but to the rest of the women here.

You will be asked to explain yourself. This will do great harm to the circle; it will affect the trust that we are trying to build. If you cannot trust the circle (each other) you will not be able to do your work, which is the reason you are all here, to do your own personal work. If you know others in the group and you have a past—then you will need to put that aside. Otherwise, you will not be focusing on your work.

At a group level, you will have a hard time growing if you become distracted or hold grudges against one another. You can talk down to one another or you can build one another up.

Remember that change takes time, and you may be trying to change patterns that you have become accustomed to your whole life.

Therefore, I invite you to walk slowly with me as we make this journey together.

Gunalchéesh, Howa

## D. Participant Introductions (40 minutes)

**Guide participants in introducing themselves.** Facilitators may suggest that participants share the following:

- Name
- Moiety and Clan, or anything else they'd like to add
- Reason for joining the group
- What they hope to get out of Phase I—what their personal goals are for participating in the group

If the meeting is held virtually, you may call on each participant to introduce themselves. Remember to ask participants to turn on their web cameras.

One way to conduct introductions is to break the group into pairs and have the pairs spend 10 minutes interviewing each other. Then ask each participant to introduce their partner to the full group.

As each participant shares their goals for the group, **write the goals on a paper pad** for the group to view, add to, or change. If the meeting is held virtually, type the goals onto a virtual whiteboard or shared document.

The following example statements from past group participants can be provided to help start the conversation:

### WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO GET OUT OF THIS GROUP?

- Control my anger – not yell so much.
- Learn not to be scared of my anger—sometimes it's my own worst enemy.
- Have greater self-control.
- Learn how to handle stress, anger, and other feelings.
- Understand why I did/do old behaviors and learn new healthy behaviors instead.
- Learn how to deal with other people's anger and manipulative behaviors.
- Learn not to stuff my feelings.
- Practice better self-care.
- Learn how to process my anger—it's like a light switch—it's that quick.
- Stop taking my anger out on my kids.
- Stop minimizing my feelings.
- I feel alone and don't want to burden others.
- I want to stop blaming others.

## II. Education Material (110 minutes)

### A. Values Agreement, Expectations, and Introduction to Phase I (45 minutes)

The facilitator introduces the curriculum and the first lesson and explains how the group operates. The goal is to seek participant input and agreement on the values, guidelines, and principles by which the group will function.

**Distribute the consent form and group intake form.** If participants have not already completed and returned these forms, provide them in the first group meeting. Participants may return the forms in advance of the second lesson.<sup>3</sup>

**Distribute the information gathering questionnaire** (optional). This form may be used to gather more extensive information about participants.

**Distribute group guidelines and expectations handout.** Review the handout with participants; it should be familiar to them, as you will have shown it to them in the one-on-one onboarding meeting. If meeting virtually, you may display the handout onscreen.

An example handout is provided below. To build participant ownership of the group, you may ask participants if there are additional group guidelines they would like to add; you can add these guidelines to the handout following the meeting and distribute the updated handout to the group in Lesson 2.

<sup>3</sup> Sample forms are provided in the Appendix.

## GROUP GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

### Phase I: Anger, Stress, and Communication

Yéil Koowú Shaawát

#### What Group Members Can Expect:

Like most healing groups, this one will go through a series of changes. Don't get discouraged and quit because *at first* it may seem like this is not what you want; the group will change over time, and the way it changes will depend on its members. Some of the developmental changes you can expect are:

- *At first*, people are reluctant to personally disclose. This isn't surprising since you are all strangers; the ability to disclose depends on how soon you learn to trust each other.
- *At first*, talking about feelings from the past will feel difficult, maybe impossible. It hurts to talk about feelings you have stuffed so long—but with time, practice, and acceptance, it gets easier.
- *At first*, expressing negative feelings in front of others—or watching them express their negative feelings—can feel too personal or not appropriate. Again, with time, practice, and acceptance, it gets easier.
- *At first*, you may have trouble accepting responsibility for “your group”. It takes time to learn to trust others; don't worry, it will happen.
- *With time*, you will come to feel safe enough to disclose your past experiences and feelings and how you are right now.
- The length of time it takes to heal will be different for each person. But remember, the distortions of a lifetime cannot be remedied within a few weeks. It takes time to heal and there are no shortcuts. Only time can heal yourself—as a counselor, all I can do is help.

#### Group Expectations/Rules

- Respect each other.
- No racist remarks or derogatory statements.
- Allow speakers to finish before you begin speaking.
- Protect confidentiality—you can talk about the topic outside of group, but no specifics.
- Use “I” statements.
- Arrive within ten minutes of group starting time.
- Call if you won't make it—if not, we will worry about you.
- Attend 10 out of 12 sessions to receive a certificate.
- Gathering/harvesting, dipping, and sweats are not mandatory.
- Respect the rules of the Talking Circle.

**Review Phase I.**<sup>4</sup> Review the purpose and outcomes for Phase I.

**Distribute the 12-week treatment syllabus** for Phase I.<sup>5</sup> Briefly review each week's topic and ask the group if there are questions.

**Read the lesson purpose** for Lesson 1 on page 4.

## B. Demonstrating Tribal Values (15 minutes)

**Review your organizational or Tribal statement of values.** It will be helpful to discuss how the group will demonstrate values consistent with those of your organization, community, and Tribe. For example, a Southeast Traditional Tribal Value is "Speak with Care."<sup>6</sup> Past groups strove to reflect this value. Facilitators should relate their Tribe's values to each lesson throughout the curriculum.

If you have access to a statement of values for your organization or Tribe, review it with participants at this time. You may wish to prepare posters, cards, or refrigerator magnets that list the values for distributing to participants.

## C. Introducing Concepts of Anger (25 minutes)

This lesson introduces concepts about the meaning and sources of anger.

**Read** (or ask a participant to read) a short passage on this topic. You may select a passage from meditations, readings, or prayers you are familiar with. Potential selections include:<sup>7</sup>

- *May 17* (p. 157) daily meditation from Hifler, J. S. (1992). *A Cherokee feast of days: Daily meditations, volume 1*. Council Oak Books.
- "Anger and Blame" by Tian Dayton from Dayton, T. (1992). *Daily affirmations for forgiving and moving on (Powerful inspiration for personal change)*. Health Communications, Inc.

If you want participants to have copies of the reading, provide the passage as printed handouts (or display them on screen in virtual meetings).

**Review** the following content about how anger is a normal human emotion:

- *Anger is a normal human emotion.*
- *Anger is an emotion, not an aggressive act.*
- *Anger need not lead to acts of aggression. Although in our society anger frequently makes people feel like committing aggression, there are many other ways of coping with anger.*
- *Anger is important because when you understand it, you can improve your life. Anger can be a signal that you are living in a way that does not meet some of your basic needs. Some of these needs may be physical—others psychological. For example, a common cause of anger is inadequate sleep or poor nutrition.*
- *We're not looking for perfection—just progress.*
- *It will take time! Just like sobriety, take anger management one day at a time.*
- *If you have a blow up or lose your temper, that's okay— you acknowledge it, learn from it, and start again.*
- *You have made a choice in coming here, and that is an important step in recovery.*
- *Beginning is a challenge, and this beginning is probably the hardest. Only the brave person begins.*

<sup>4</sup> Facilitators can use the materials on pages 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> See sample in the Appendix.

<sup>6</sup> As an example, view the Southeast Traditional Tribal Values at <https://cbs.cchita-nsn.gov/our-values/>.

<sup>7</sup> Refer to the Introduction volume for guidance on using these resources.

- *Only the truly courageous continue the journey to healing, change, and recovery.*
- *Again, thank you for coming. This group will continue to learn about and discuss anger in future lessons.*

You may also discuss examples of your own negative experiences with anger and integrate additional materials and resources about anger and its role in our lives.

**Ask** the group:

*Would anyone like to share any experiences or perceptions around anger?*

#### **D. The Medicine Wheel (20 minutes)**

**The facilitator introduces the Medicine Wheel and Four Directions.** Facilitators will describe basic concepts and relationships in sets of four to mirror the Medicine Wheel and will articulate the importance of cultural and spiritual components of healing. In addition to covering the key points listed below, you may select and review additional resources about the Medicine Wheel and provide handouts to the group.

##### **Review:**

- The Medicine Wheel (MW) teaches us that there are four aspects to every human being: the physical, the mental, the emotional, and the spiritual. Each of these aspects must be equally developed in a healthy, well-balanced individual.
- When a person is wounded or abused, all aspects of that individual are traumatized. It stands to reason that in order to heal, each of these aspects must be addressed for healing to take place—this is the essence of the MW and many of the foundational concepts that underpin this curriculum. For true learning to occur, it is said that each of the four aspects must be involved in the process.
- Like a mirror can be used to see things not normally seen (behind us or around the corner), the MW can be used to help us see or understand things we cannot quite see or understand because they are ideas and not physical objects.
- In this sense, the MW is an assessment tool to help us understand if we are in balance and what we need to work on for ourselves.

Diagrams will be useful when teaching about the Medicine Wheel. If meeting virtually, a whiteboard and the screen-sharing tool can be helpful for displaying documents and images. In addition, you may choose to show a video about the Medicine Wheel; examples can be found in the Lesson 1 resources below.

Facilitators may choose to discuss their experiences with Native culture growing up before using the following questions to guide conversation.

##### **Ask the group:**

*Does anyone want to share any experiences or perceptions of how growing up was for you? Or anything about your Tribal values or the Medicine Wheel?*

### E. Four Sacred Laws (5 minutes)

The Four Sacred Laws, also known as the Four Laws of Change, come from the Wellbriety Movement, a Native recovery approach.

**Review the Four Laws** with the group and discuss:

1. *Change has to come from within. (In order for anything to change and grow, it must struggle. Struggle is not bad—be grateful.)*
2. *A vision is needed to make that change. (We will move toward and become like that which we think about.)*
3. *A great learning must take place. (This involves the four aspects of the self: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual).*
4. *You must create a healing forest. (This is typically your support system, such as your family and this group.)*

### III. Closing (10 minutes)

**Close with a reading.** You may use one of the selections from the Introducing Anger section on p. 13. Another possibility is to review a list of ways to reduce stress. Useful lists are available on many web sites, and samples are provided in the Lesson 1 resources below.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

### Tips/Suggestions

- Remember to ask participants if they have any questions at several points during the lesson.
- When asking participants to share their goals for the group, facilitators may choose to break participants into groups of three, give each group a pencil and sheet of paper, and ask that they write a minimum of three group goals they hope to get from Phase I. Then guide participants in sharing their goals with the larger group. The facilitator can collect the papers and share them with participants in Lesson 11.
- Facilitators should remember to continuously thank participants for sharing personal information about their lives.
- The relationship between the facilitator and each participant is critical to the success of the group. The first lesson is an opportunity to begin building rapport based on trust, understanding, and mutual respect.
- The facilitator must stress the importance of confidentiality and protection of one another in the group, explaining that it is a closed group because that is necessary to build trust and develop rapport. This concept should be repeated in future weeks as a critical component of group participation.

## Resources

- Bopp, J., Bopp, M., Brown, L., Lane, P., & Lucas, P. (1989). *The sacred tree*. Wilmot, WI: Lotus Light.
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## Lesson 2 – Cycle of Violence



### Lesson Purpose

The primary purpose of this lesson is to learn about the Cycle of Violence: The Bud, Blast, and Honeymoon. This lesson will help participants recognize and take responsibility for their role and behaviors in the cycle, recognize how they may keep the cycle operating, and take ownership for their thoughts and feelings. Participants will learn that all emotions have energy, and that there is an innate need to release that energy. Participants will learn that anger expressed in an uncontrolled and unhealthy way can be scary for children to witness and create feelings of anxiety and other potential adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Facilitators may use the resources listed at the end of this lesson or other resources they're familiar with to tailor the delivery of this lesson's content to meet the needs of the participants and the lesson's objectives.

### Objectives

- Learn about anger, how it affects us, and its role in our lives.
- Learn about the Cycle of Violence and how to recognize one's potential role in keeping the cycle operating.
- Understand that anger and other emotions have energy and that there is a need to release that energy.
- Understand how quickly feelings of anger can escalate.
- Learn about the impacts and progressive nature of relationship abuse.
- Review the group and program guidelines and participant expectations and responsibilities.

### Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

### Handouts

- "The Circle" Passage
- Group Guidelines and Expectations
- Cycle/Stages of Anger
- The Anger Scale
- Continuum of Relationship Abuse

- Codependent Relationships
- How Abuse Impacts the Batterer, the Battered Mate, and Children
- Fighting Fair
- Codependent Relationships

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome and Introductions (30 minutes)

#### A. Welcome

**Welcome** participants to the group and thank them for coming.

**Invite** participants to seat themselves in a circle (when meeting in person). When meeting virtually, ask participants to turn on their web camera.

**Take attendance.** Call out participants' names to take attendance. Mark attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, you can have participants use a sign-in sheet to take attendance.

The program is still very new to participants in Lesson 2. In addition, new participants are permitted to join the group at this time. For these reasons, it will be helpful to review introductory materials from Lesson 1.

#### B. "The Circle" Reading

**Read this passage** in each of the first three weeks of Phase I to help participants understand the importance of confidentiality. The passage can be found in Lesson 1 of this guide.

#### C. Participant Introductions

New participants are permitted to join the group in Lesson 2. Follow the process outlined in Lesson 1 to **allow new participants to introduce themselves**.

#### D. Group Guidelines and Expectations

**Review the group guidelines and expectations** with participants and you may ask participants if there are additional group guidelines they would like to add. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may display the handout on screen. An example handout is provided in Lesson 1.

#### E. Opening Reading

**Provide an opening reading** to prompt thinking about anger, how it affects us, and its role in our lives. A potential reading is the *June 1* (p. 175) daily meditation from *A Cherokee Feast of Days: Daily Meditations, Volume 1* by Joyce Hifler. Facilitators may select a different reading of their choice.

#### F. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

## II. Education Material (140 minutes)

### A. Introduction to the Cycle of Violence and Cycle of Anger (5 minutes)

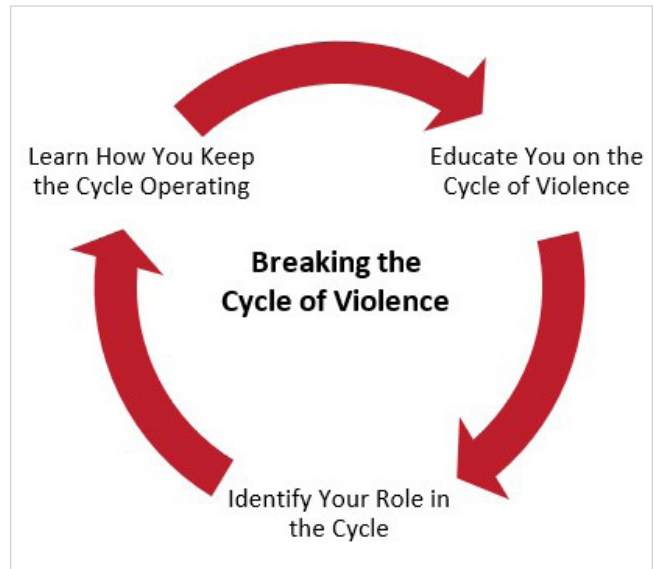
**Read:**

All emotions have energy AND that energy must be released somewhere. This is important to keep in mind because, whether we realize it or not, we can choose how to release that energy. Unhealthy examples would be hitting a wall, hitting your mate, hitting a child, drinking, or engaging in other potentially addictive or destructive behaviors (e.g., overeating, gambling, or overspending). On the other hand, examples of healthier choices are journaling, exercising, calling a trusted friend, or attending a support group meeting. We'll cover more on this later, but first let's look at how this energy starts to build.

My invitation to you is to walk slowly through this with me—all of your experiences are different and what we know we draw from past experiences unique to each of us, although we have much in common. We're united in many ways, and we are not alone. The goal of tonight's lesson is for you to: 1) take responsibility for your role and behaviors in the cycle; 2) take ownership of your thoughts and behaviors; and 3) recognize how you keep the cycle operating.

This cycle can apply to many kinds of relationships, including those between couples, parents and minor children, parents and adult children, siblings, and employers and employees. Try and keep an open mind—this cycle is not only about couples in romantic relationships.

If you've learned unhealthy ways of coping with stress, you must take whatever action is necessary to unlearn those unhealthy ways. Otherwise, when the next overwhelming, stressful event happens, you will fall back on your old patterns of behavior.



### B. The Cycle of Violence Phases: Bud, Blast, Honeymoon (20 minutes)

**Describe** the three phases of the cycle: 1) The Bud, 2) The Blast, and 3) The Honeymoon.

**THE BUD:** This is the tension-building phase when you begin to feel your anger rising or escalating. It is the precipitating event. In cases of domestic violence, **the Batterer typically denies responsibility by blaming anything external in their world.** It could be the weather, work, traffic, or their boss. There is a lot of energy behind our emotions and anger is no different—that energy that is building is powerful and if it gets out of control this energy takes on a life of its own. Your **self-talk** is what feeds this fire.

The victim in this cycle blames it on some kind of outside stress too: it's the kids and finances. This person often makes excuses for the batterer, consciously or subconsciously.

For example, imagine a mother or father driving their car, the kids arguing in the back seat: "he is touching me, she is staring at me, he won't give me back my toy." The parent is late getting somewhere. So, you have a precipitating event (having to get somewhere) and tension building as the kids are fighting in the back seat. After several attempts at getting the kids to quiet down and stop fighting, the tension and the energy behind what the parent is feeling continues to build.

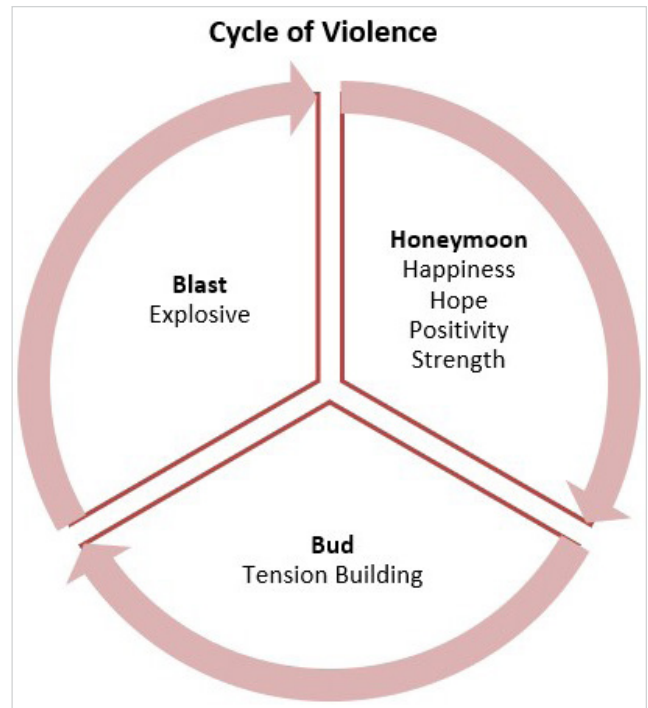
**THE BLAST:** This is the explosion—it is the buildup of all that stress and that energy. The anger escalates to a point where all that tension needs to be released—the "crescendo" or the breaking point—which can include domestic violence. The batterer blames it on stress or some kind of outside stressor, could be the victim, the kids, or the boss. If the individual is drinking, there is a good chance it will escalate and potentially can turn into rage and can include a blackout, where the angry individual does not remember the incident afterwards.

The parent driving the car who can't get the kids to quit fighting finally explodes and ends up backhanding one of the kids. One kid may blame it on another: "You see what you did. You made mom/dad mad. This is your fault!"

**THE HONEYMOON:** The honeymoon is the happy time. This is the making up time. The victim wants to believe it won't happen again. The batterer may apologize and promise it won't happen again and, in that moment, the batterer is sincere in their apology. They honestly believe it won't happen again and they mean it when they say they are sorry. The victim also believes that the batterer is sorry, and they want to forgive. The victim may minimize the injury or the incident, believing the promises that the batterer is making.

The parent may apologize to the kids and the kids will forgive—excusing or minimizing the parent's behavior.

The cycle of violence will continue unless interrupted by the couple breaking up or becoming educated about the cycle itself. Domestic violence increases in frequency and severity, often eventually ending in one of two ways: homicide or suicide. An excellent movie that demonstrates this cycle is *The Burning Bed* because it shows how the honeymoon time lessens, the bud or tension-building phase escalates and takes less time to reach, and the explosive stage or blast increases and becomes more violent. Less time is spent in the other two stages and more time is spent in the explosive or blast stage.



Facilitators may conduct the following optional small group exercises on the Cycle of Violence:

- Before sharing the Cycle of Violence with the group, break participants into small groups. Have each group create their own steps to a cycle of violence and share them with the full group. Then review the Cycle of Violence.
- Have each group member write down the sequence of behaviors and events that lead to domestic violence. Share in small groups and identify patterns to be shared with the full group.
- After describing the cycle of violence, break group members up into small groups and have each group prepare a healthy plan to foster communication and end the cycle. Share results in the full group.

### C. The Cycle/Stages of Anger (10 minutes)

Review and discuss:

#### CYCLE/STAGES OF ANGER

Typical stages of a couple's argument include:

1. A precipitating event
2. An angry outburst
3. Screaming or crying
4. A crescendo (perhaps including domestic violence)
5. Exhaustion
6. Withdrawal or apology.

Think about the toll anger takes on your relationships—what it cost you in terms of support and satisfaction.

Once you permit verbal or physical aggression to enter your relationship, you develop a tendency to return again and again to this type of response—this can be called the "Dance of Anger."

Chronic anger does not make you strong. It makes you weak. It encourages attack. The truth is anger begets anger. The more you shout, the more you invite shouting. The more you rage, the more you invite rage.

### D. The Anger Scale (20 minutes)

Reference the diagram on page 21 and describe the anger scale:

*Anger has a lot of energy. Whenever we are stressed, anger starts to build, and if we don't find a way to release it, this energy will increase until there is an explosion. The angrier we get, the more energy builds, and the more tension rises.*

*Anger triggers the body's 'fight, flight, or freeze' response. The adrenal glands flood the body with stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol.*

*If we imagine an anger scale, at the very bottom of the scale, "0" is where we may say, "I'm not angry at all." As our anger starts rising, we intensify or escalate our anger by saying things like, "Why don't you help me?" or "You never help me" (Blaming). Or we try to make people around us feel badly by putting them down or using name-calling. We don't even have to verbalize; we can intensify our anger by thinking negatively (self-talk).*

*As we start moving up the scale, stress intensifies; anger intensifies. What we may not be aware of is that there is an instinct to release the energy. As the energy builds, we start moving up the scale, until we get to the "Blast," the "Explosion," which is all of that energy exploding and being released. That's the "10." And once they have exploded, they are done; they released their anger; their energy is spent. Some people will realize the damage they've just done and want to make it up to you (sometimes almost immediately after the event). This is the honeymoon or make-up stage.*

Describe the 0–3 Rule (Zero to Three Rule):

*The 0–3 Rule says that when our anger is at the 0–3 part of the scale, it is still possible to control and manage our anger. How we respond during this 0–3 will determine whether we can transform that energy. The reason we call this the 0–3 Rule is because when people get triggered, they can go up the anger scale in 3 seconds or it could take 3 minutes. It depends on if you are a person whose anger goes from 0–10 in ten seconds or if you're the person who just takes it and takes it without saying or doing anything, but anger is building. We are going to learn more about all these kinds of people in Lesson 4.*

*What the 0–3 Rule means is you have a very short time to get control. It may take only seconds or minutes to take control*

of your anger, but that is a decision you must make right then, in the moment, in order to start changing and moving your energy constructively. Otherwise, you may be repeating exactly how you learned to cope with stress because whenever we get stressed, we will fall back on familiar behaviors and patterns of handling it unless we can start adjusting by making subtle changes. It doesn't have to be huge changes; remember, baby steps. Do something a little different next time you start to see yourself moving up the anger scale. Recognize what is happening; it's important to understand and learn about yourself, how do you typically respond; are the you person who goes off in 10 seconds, do you recognize if you are escalating your anger through your negative self-talk or thoughts? Understanding you is the first step in taking responsibility for your anger. Because once you've gone past a 4 or a 5 on the anger scale, there is no turning back; you've built up energy that must be released.

The best thing you can do; the skillful thing is to recognize that you need to release your anger/energy in a constructive way. If you frequently yell when you are angry, remove yourself from the situation or the stimulus; whether that is a person or the situation; walk away, step back; it takes no skill to get in someone's face and yell at them but it does take skill to communicate, to say "I am so angry right now, I may say or do something I'm going to regret so I am going to give myself 10 minutes to calm down and get control of myself". The next time you notice you are angry, stop yelling, step back; then remember to breathe. Breathing has many benefits; oxygen dilutes the adrenaline, slows the heart, and keeps the pre-frontal cortex open. Using this part of the brain enables us to make rational decisions and see our options. We can also be curious as to what might happen if you actually took the time to practice the healthier options instead of always getting angry. Remember: Breathing increases oxygen flow to the brain and increases the capacity to think and concentrate. This promotes feelings of relaxation and well-being. Breathe.

Remember that once you are past that 3 seconds or 3 minutes (however long it takes) and you are at a 4 or 5 on this anger scale, it is too late. There is no turning back because now the energy will find a way to release itself. Are there any questions about this? Thank you for your patience while covering this handout.

## E. Continuum of Relationship Abuse (15 minutes)

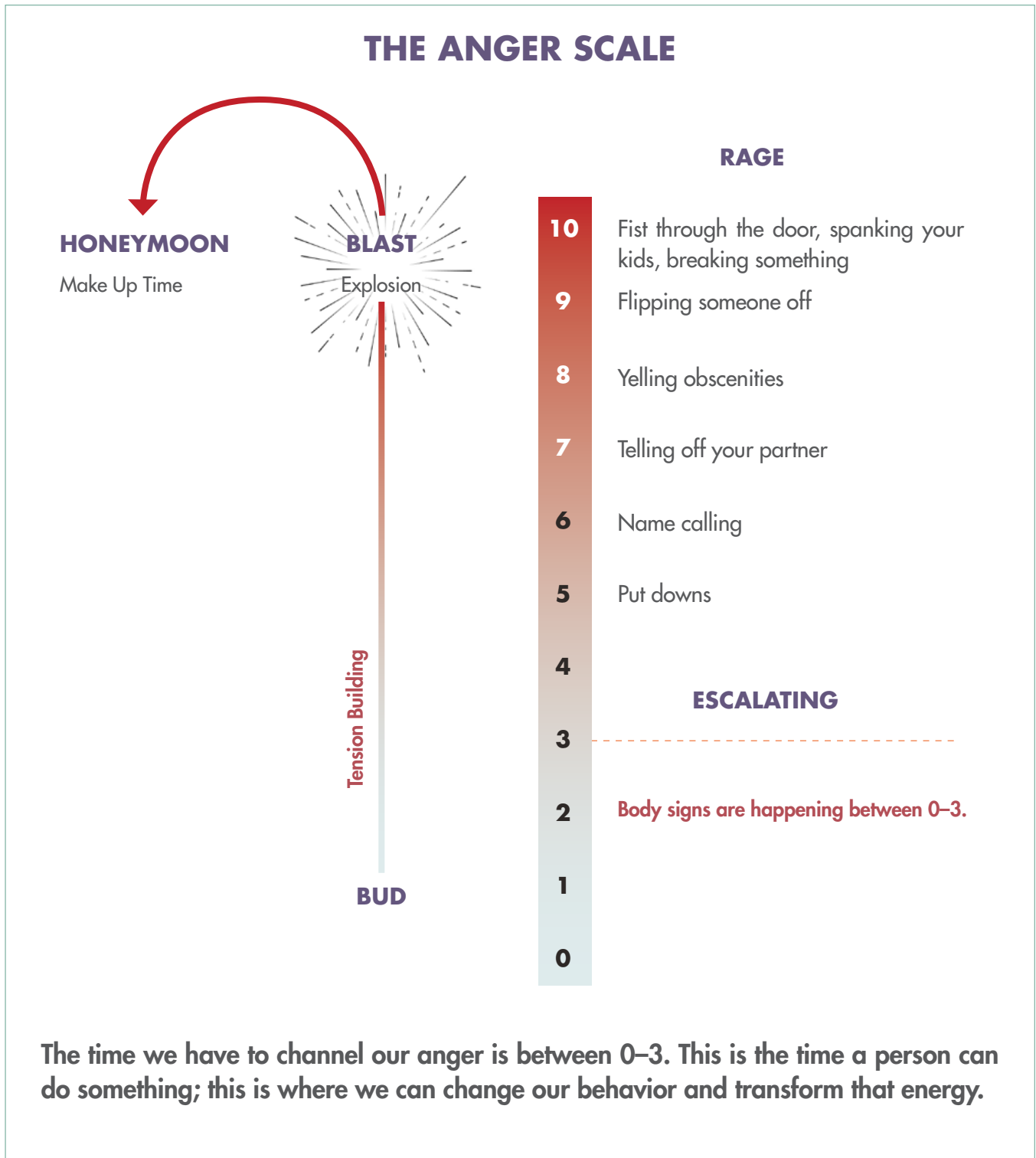
**Read and discuss** the handout on the Continuum of Relationship Abuse (See page 22.):

*This figure shows how relationship violence can build along a continuum in each of these areas: "Physical," "Verbal/Emotional," and "Sexual." Someone may start out their abusive behavior very mildly with pushing, which progresses to slapping and punching, and then continues on up the continuum. The reason it says "Death" is because it may end in homicide or suicide. If we allow an abusive behavior or pattern to continue, there is a high likelihood that it will end in death. Depending on our mental state at the time, we may be feeling hurt, hopeless, or powerless that anything will change, and take our own life. Do you understand what I mean?*

### Small Group Exercise

As an exercise, the facilitator may break the group into small groups of 3–4 participants and have each small group identify feelings, characteristics, and behaviors associated with the perpetrator and victim in each cycle. You may guide the activity with the handout on page 22.

*I'd like everyone to take a look at each category, under "Physical," "Verbal/Emotional," and "Sexual," and see if you can recognize, not only where it starts to escalate, but whether you have seen yourself doing any of these behaviors. I'm also going to ask some of you to be brave and share either whether you've experienced any of these as a victim or whether you've been the abuser yourself because we are all not innocent victims here; if we are in an abusive relationship, we have a role in this abuse cycle whether we choose to admit it or just passively continue it. So, who would like to go first? If no one volunteers, I will call on someone. This is important because if we want to start making positive changes and move toward healthier choices, we first have to take responsibility by admitting our past behaviors.*



## CONTINUUM OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Relationship violence usually happens as part of a continuum from mild abuse to serious violence. It often begins with mild forms of abuse, such as name-calling or slapping. If nothing happens to stop the violence, it will gradually grow worse. Without some kind of help, the end result can be death.

### PHYSICAL

pushing    punching    slapping    kicking    throwing objects    choking    using weapons    homicide/suicide    **Death**

### VERBAL /EMOTIONAL

name calling    criticizing    "you're no good"    ignoring    yelling    "you're fat"    isolation    humiliation    **Suicide**

### SEXUAL

unwanted touching    sexual name calling    unfaithfulness    false accusations    forced sex    hurtful sex    **Rape**



## F. Batterer/Battered Mate/Children (20 minutes)

**Discuss** adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

*According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood."<sup>8</sup>*

**Display or share** the table on the next page and **read**:

*Let's look at how abuse impacts the batterer, the battered mate, and children. I will read the first line on this list starting with batterer and read across the page. But before I start reading, I will ask for volunteers to read each line across as well. If there aren't any volunteers, I will call on three different participants to read.*

*The reading pattern I'm looking for is this: I will read only the first line, then call on the first volunteer who will read the next line; the second volunteer will read the third line, and so on until we've moved on down this list. Now if I've totally confused you, don't sweat it, I'll keep track of where we are and then call on the volunteer readers.*

<sup>8</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019, November 5). *Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs): Preventing early trauma to improve adult health*. CDC Vital Signs. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces/pdf/vs-1105-aces-H.pdf>

**HOW ABUSE IMPACTS THE BATTERER, THE BATTERED MATE, AND CHILDREN**

<b>BATTERER</b> Batterer Is Characterized By	<b>BATTERED MATE</b> Battered Mate Is Characterized By	<b>CHILDREN</b> Children Are Characterized By
. . . fearfulness that partner and/or children will abandon; fear of being alone.	. . . constant fear and terror which gradually becomes cumulative and oppressive with time.	. . . constant fear and terror for their life as well as parents and siblings; confusion and insecurity (appetite/sleep disturbances).
. . . containment/confinement of mate and use of espionage tactics against her (i.e., checks mileage/times errands).	. . . helplessly “allowing” containment or confinement/restriction by mate; usually misinterpreted as caring behavior.	. . . increasing deceptiveness; lying, excuses for outings, stealing, cheating, feeling trapped by parental dynamics.
. . . use of invasive tactics; violates others’ personal boundaries; rejects responsibility for failure (marital, familial, or occupational) or for violent acts.	. . . gradually losing sight of personal boundaries for self and children; unable to assess danger accurately; accepts all blame.	. . . poor definition of personal boundaries, violation of others’ personal boundaries; accepts/projects blame.
. . . belief that coercive behavior is aimed at securing the family nucleus (“for the good of the family”).	. . . belief that transient acceptance of violent behavior will ultimately lead to long term resolution of family problems.	. . . little or no understanding of the dynamics of violence; often assumes violence to be the norm.
. . . absence of guilt/remorse on an emotional level even after intellectual recognition.	. . . emotional acceptance of guilt for mate’s behavior; thinks mate “can’t help it,” considers own behavior as provocative.	. . . self-blame (depending on age) for family feuding, separation, divorce, and internal conflicts.
. . . generational history of abuse.	. . . generational history of witnessing abuse in family and/or being abused.	. . . continuation of abuse pattern in adult life.
. . . frequent participation in pecking order battering.	. . . participation in pecking order battering.	. . . frequent participation in pecking order pattern (maims or kills animals, abuses siblings); often times abuses parents in later years.
. . . assaultive skills which improve with age and experience (increase in danger potential and lethality risks to family members over time).	. . . “creative” behavior which either diverts or precipitates mate’s violence; but level of carelessness increases (judgement of lethality potential deteriorates) over time.	. . . poor problem-solving skills: may use violence as problem-solving technique in school, with peers, with family (appears as early as preschool); demonstrates aggression or passivity.
. . . demanding and often assaultive role in sexual activities; sometimes punishes with abstinence, at times experiences impotence.	. . . poor sexual self-image. Assumes that role is total acceptance of partner’s sexual behavior. Attempts at abstinence result in further abuse.	. . . poor sexual image, uncertainty about appropriate behavior, confused model identification, immaturity in peer relationships.
. . . increasingly assaultive behavior when mate is pregnant; pregnancy often marks the first assault.	. . . high risk for assaults/abuse during pregnancy.	. . . higher risk for assaults during mother’s pregnancy.
. . . controlling by threatening homicide and/or suicide . . . often attempts one or both when partners separate (known to complete either or both).	. . . frequent contemplation of suicide, history of minor attempts, occasionally completes suicide or becomes a homicide victim; frequently wishes partner dead. Occasionally, completes homicide in self-defense.	. . . heightened suicide risks and attempts, increased thoughts of suicide and/or murdering parents; prone to negligence and carelessness.

**G. Fighting Fair (10 minutes)**

**Read and discuss** the principles of fighting fair, positive steps to help stop the cycle of abuse. The following may be read or shared as a handout.

<p><b>FIGHTING FAIR</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the problem.</li> <li>2. Talk only about the problem.</li> <li>3. Solve the problem—don't blame or attack.</li> <li>4. Respect the other person's feelings.</li> <li>5. Listen with an open mind.</li> <li>6. Take responsibility for your actions—your part of the agreement.</li> </ol>	<p><b>NOT FAIR!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Physical violence</li> <li>▪ Threats</li> <li>▪ Blaming</li> <li>▪ Name calling</li> <li>▪ Put downs</li> <li>▪ Bringing up the past</li> </ul>
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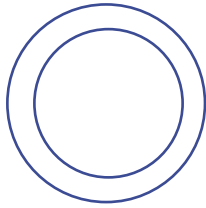
**H. Codependent Relationships and Domestic Violence (20 minutes)**

Codependent relationships are one kind of relationship where domestic violence can occur. The facilitator will have participants look at three types of relationships and remind participants that these three relationships are not exclusive to couples only. The facilitator will illustrate these relationships with the aid of the diagram below that will distinguish codependent, independent, and inter-dependent relationships. The concepts and characteristics of these relationships will be discussed in detail in Phase II of the curriculum.

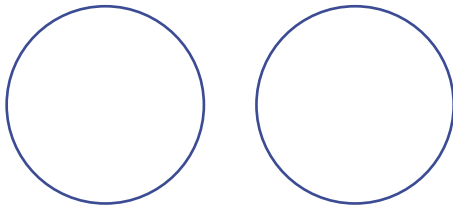
The facilitator will draw the bridge across the two separate circles after discussing both the codependent and independent relationships. (To indicate the bridge, you might draw two lines to connect the circles.)

Ask participants to think about which of these three relationships would best describe their current or most recent relationship, and which of these three relationships is the healthiest.

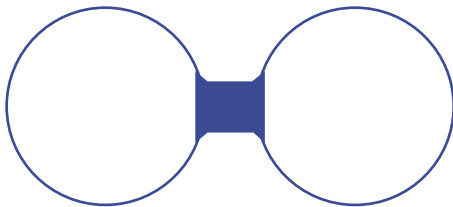
## CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS



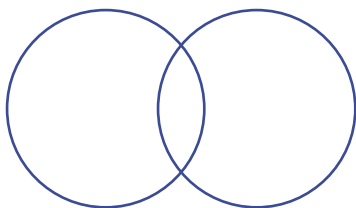
**Codependent relationships** are characterized by a lack of boundaries. Usually, one person is more controlling of the other and can dictate where they go, who they see, and how long they are allowed to be away from them. This is a relationship that is enmeshed; you often can't tell them apart (e.g., you ask one of them a question and the other answers, or one is talking and the other interrupts and finishes the sentence/story). Often, one person feels trapped in this type of relationship. One or both may feel there is no sense of self.



An **independent relationship** is illustrated as distant, disconnected. The individuals in the relationship are separate (e.g., they may be living in the same house but are detached from each other or unsociable). They no longer have anything in common and are leading separate lives. They've grown apart. This is referred to as an independent relationship.



A couple in a codependent or independent relationship might seek couples counseling. However, this may not be effective because one or the other might not feel safe enough to be truthful. Instead, a counselor could seek to pull the codependent relationship apart and provide individual counseling, helping each one to gain a sense of independent identity. Once a sense of individuality is established, the counselor works to **build a bridge**.



This third relationship is referred to as an **interdependent relationship**. The individuals have a sense of their own identity. They are aware of their own likes and dislikes. In this diagram, the larger part of each circle makes up two-thirds and represents each person's individual identity, while the overlap in the middle of the circles represents their commitment to the relationship and makes up a third. They are not giving up their identity but share a part of themselves. The two hallmarks of a healthy relationship are: 1) Identity, and 2) Equality. In an interdependent relationship, both partners each give equally to the relationship.

### I. Locus of Control (20 minutes)

**Discuss the concept of locus of control.** Participants learn what “locus of control” means, including internal/external locus of control. The facilitator can use an example of a woman in a domestic violence (DV) relationship who decides, or has been thinking, that she’s had enough, that something must change, and she makes the decision that she must leave, if not for herself, for her children. This is an example of having an internal locus of control, as opposed to a neighbor calling the police during a DV incident, after which the woman and children go to a women’s DV shelter—which would be an external locus of control. The intervention was external, came from outside. Having an internal locus of control means the decision comes from within.

### J. Discussion

Facilitators may also ask participants to reflect on what they learned in the lesson. You may use these questions to guide discussion:

- Is it okay to be angry? We have many emotions, but it’s what we choose to do with them or how we handle them that’s going to either be destructive or constructive.
- What has our society/culture taught us about anger? Is it constructive or destructive?
- Is it okay for a man to be angry?
- Historically, is it more okay for a man to be angry than a woman to be angry in our society?
- Is it okay for a Native man/woman to be angry?

If there is time, you may review key points from the lesson:

- Describe the three phases of the cycle: 1) The Bud, 2) The Blast, and 3) The Honeymoon.
- Cycle applies to: Couples, parent/child, peers, siblings, friends, etc.
- Our goal is to take responsibility for our role in the cycle and take ownership for our thoughts.

### III. Closing (10 minutes)

**Close the lesson with a short reading.** Select a poem, meditation, or passage related to the concepts in Lesson 2.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform’s chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

### Tips/Suggestions

- This lesson addresses sensitive issues that may cause participants to remember painful experiences and trigger deep emotions. Remember to be patient and comforting and to frequently check-in with participants. It can also be helpful to slow down. The lesson content is important, but the well-being of group participants comes first. Facilitators may wish to review outside resources or seek training to help prepare for discussing past traumas.

## Resources

- Campus Against Sexual Assault. (n.d.). *Intimate partner violence abuse continuum*. Abby's House, Center for Equity & Gender Justice, Western Oregon University. <https://wou.edu/abbyshouse/files/2015/07/violence-continuum.pdf>
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## Lesson 3 – Physiology of Anger

### Lesson Purpose

In this lesson, participants will:

- Learn how to recognize and identify unhealthy and destructive ways of dealing with their anger.
- Identify at least two healthy and constructive approaches they can use instead.
- Discover the power of breathing and positive self-talk as techniques for calming down and regaining balance.
- Understand the physiology of anger by scanning the body for stress.
- Learn about basic brain anatomy; the role of the hypothalamus; and the fight, flight, or freeze response.

Past facilitators of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum recommend that future facilitators stop admitting new group members after Lesson 3. Closing the group to new members helps ensure that participants get to know each other and build trust throughout the sessions, which is important in helping participants feel safe and comfortable enough to open up and share personal information about their lives and experiences. This open sharing is critical to the success of the program. If there is a person who would like to join after Lesson 3, we recommend that the facilitator present this to the group for their input and allow them to be involved in the decision.

### Objectives

- Understand the body's physiology, how it relates to anger, and the connection between the mind, body, and spirit.
- Learn about the fight, flight, or freeze response.
- Identify what makes us angry and begin to identify constructive and destructive ways of working with anger.
- Learn the importance of good nutrition and making healthy choices.
- Discover the power of breathing.

### Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils, Crayons, and Colored Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- *Daybreak: Meditations for Women Survivors of Sexual Abuse* by Maureen Brady
- "Take Time" a poem by Martin Greyford
- Infographics about Brain Anatomy

- Infographics about How Stress Affects the Body. (Useful infographics on this topic can be found at [www.heartmath.com](http://www.heartmath.com))
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Handouts

- “The Circle” Passage
- Group Guidelines and Expectations
- Tools in Understanding Anger (an aid for further explaining the anger scale first introduced in Lesson 2)
- Stress Symptoms: Physical Affects
- List of Strategies for Handling Stress
- Physiology of Anger Handout (can be used as a group activity)

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome and Introductions (30 minutes)

To begin the session, the facilitator welcomes participants back and leads the following activities:

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participant’s names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

#### B. “The Circle” Reading

**Read this passage** in each of the first three weeks of Phase I to help participants understand the importance of confidentiality. The passage can be found in Lesson 1 of this guide.

#### C. Participant Introductions

New participants are permitted to join the group in the Lesson 3 session. Follow the process outlined in Lesson 1 to **allow new participants to introduce themselves**. Inform participants that no new members will be admitted to the group for the remainder of this phase and explain why.

*The reason we close the group is because it’s hard to build trust and be able to open up and share when we continually see new people coming to the group. And that’s why we close the group, so that you can build trust.*

#### D. Group Guidelines and Expectations

**Review the group guidelines and expectations** with participants and you may ask participants if there are additional group guidelines they would like to add. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may display the handout on screen. An example handout is provided in Lesson 1.

## E. Opening Reading

**Provide an opening reading** to prompt thinking about anger, how it affects us, and its role in our lives. Facilitators may choose their own reading. A potential reading is the inspirational meditation, "Anger," from *Daybreak: Meditations for Women Survivors of Sexual Abuse* by Maureen Brady.<sup>9</sup>

## F. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

# II. Education Material (140 Minutes)

## A. Activity: Healthy Ways of Dealing with Anger (35 minutes)

**Guide activity** to have participants identify, brainstorm, and share three things that make them angry as well as three destructive or unhealthy ways they use to cope with their anger. This activity is intended to have the tone of a spontaneous, energetic brainstorm. We suggest that the facilitator use a paper pad if in person or use share screen if using a virtual platform as participants brainstorm during this activity. The facilitator has each participant take a turn to identify what makes them angry and asks every woman to share two or three unhealthy ways they have dealt with their anger. Each participant will also have the opportunity to identify two or three ways they have of dealing with their anger in a healthy and productive way. The facilitator explains that the reason we ask everyone is to have the opportunity to learn *about* each other and *from* each other—in this case, about some healthy techniques for coping with anger.

To begin the activity, the facilitator may first share three things that make her angry and write them on the paper pad for participants to see. (If the facilitator does not want to share, begin with the next step instead.) Afterward, the facilitator asks participants, in turn:

1. What are three things that make you angry?
2. What are three *destructive* ways of dealing with that anger?
3. What are three *healthy and constructive* ways of handling anger?

Once everyone has answered the questions, discuss the answers as a group. The goal is to engage participants in thinking about the ways they cope; whether the ways are healthy, successful, and beneficial in the long term; and how to substitute more healthy and effective ways of dealing with anger. The discussion is an opportunity for participants to learn from one another.

## B. Tools in Understanding Anger (25 minutes)

**Use materials and handouts** to explain tools in understanding anger.

**Review the 0–3 Rule from the handout on page 21.** Discuss how the body can show signs or is responding before the brain (emotional intelligence) catches up.

**Explain (or reiterate) the concept of anger as energy** – that all emotions have energy, and it is the buildup of this energy that is created in the tension-building phase. The natural reaction is to release that energy. If the person is unskilled at managing emotions, the energy's release can be self-destructive or hurtful to others. The "Tools in Understanding Anger" handout on the next page provides examples of how to constructively release this energy. **Review the handout** with participants.

<sup>9</sup> Brady, M. (1991). *Daybreak: Meditations for women survivors of sexual abuse*. Hazelden Publishing.

## TOOLS IN UNDERSTANDING ANGER

### The Physiological Response or 0–3 Concept When Anger Escalation Is Occurring

1. Use Energy-Channeling Methods

For example: vacuuming, raking, running, swimming, walking, cleaning house vigorously

This can be helpful when we have not yet developed fully adequate skills for effectively verbalizing feelings.

2. Use Distracting Techniques if your anger is escalating towards destructive behavior:

- Restructuring of the action is necessary
- Back away from the situation

3. Using Calming Techniques:

- Positive self-talk
- Going for a walk
- Visualizations of being in a peaceful place
- Gardening
- Painting

### Use of these can assist you in reducing the 0–3 response time when you are physiologically escalating by

- Reducing blood pressure
- Slowing the mind
- Reducing muscle tension

You learn that instead of displacing your anger, you have a choice to deal directly with its source. When you realize this, you have control over how you choose to respond to triggers, to listen and use your intellect and judgment. You can decide whether an issue is important enough to respond to: your choice, what will you do?



### C. Brain Anatomy and the Physiology of Anger (25 minutes)

Share basic information about brain anatomy and how this impacts our response to stress. It is important to use visual tools to support this instruction. You can find resources on the web and in the Lesson 3 Resources below. Key points include:

- The importance of getting oxygen to the brain—why breathing is a productive skill when feeling angry and out of control.
- Anger and behavior: (1) the physiological changes when experiencing an emotion; (2) that they have subjective feelings about the event/person; and (3) expressive behaviors.
- The body's fight, flight, or freeze response.

- The hypothalamus: A structure in the brain stem that monitors body activities such as eating/sleeping, the hypothalamus plays a major role in controlling emotional behavior. The hypothalamus is a part of the brain stem that has a role in producing emotion and motivating behavior such as: rage, fear, sexual response, intense arousal, and the fight, flight, or freeze response.

**Scanning Your Body for Stress**

**Read** the following passage to the group:

*Remember we are looking at how stress affects our mental and emotional health. Tonight, we will look at how it affects our body physiologically. This handout here is to remind us how to scan our body and recognize stress. Take a look at the list and try to identify what happens to you when you are stressed, anxious, or experiencing intense emotions. It is so important for you to know what's going on with your body. I'll repeat it again, your body responds before the rest of you might realize what's going on, so the more that we can start paying attention to our body's signals, the better we will be at making the choice to stop or de-escalate before it gets out of hand.*

*The stress of anger produces a powerful physical response resulting in major effects on body functions.*

*Anger can be occasional and appropriate or chronic and contribute to a number of diseases.*

The facilitator may wish to display diagrams of the human body that show how anger and stress affect the body. (See Resources section below for examples.)

Using a handout, paper pad, or virtual whiteboard, **have participants identify (or circle on paper) the physiological responses that they have experienced** and share with each other as a group activity.

**STRESS SYMPTOMS: PHYSICAL EFFECTS**

Blood pressure up	Nausea/Vomiting	Tics, trembling, or twitching
Increased heart rate	Clenched jaws	Diarrhea
Difficulty in breathing	Blurred vision	Muscles tightening
Sweaty palms	Low disease tolerance	Hearing increases
Tightness in chest	Flushed face	Headaches
Urinary frequency	Poor circulation	Cold sweats

**D. How Stress Affects the Body (15 minutes)**

**Share information about this topic** by reading material and sharing infographics that illustrate how stress can impact the various parts and systems in our bodies.

*It is well documented that stress can have impacts on our health. The hypothalamus triggers the release of stress hormones, which causes increased heart rate, quickened breathing, and tense muscles. This response was designed to protect your body in an emergency by preparing you to react quickly. But when the stress response keeps firing, day after day, it can put our health at serious risk. Stress that's left unchecked can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.*

Websites with helpful graphics are identified in this lesson's Resources.

## E. Breathing Activity (20 minutes)

**Demonstrate** box breathing (also known as four-square breathing) as a skill to calm the body and the mind. See the Lesson 3 Resources below for information on box breathing.

**Explain** three important benefits of getting oxygen to the brain:

1. *Oxygen dilutes adrenaline, which is being released in the body because the individual is experiencing some sort of threat [real or imagined].*
2. *Oxygen slows the heart: The heart typically beats between 60–100 beats per minute and can go up to 130–150 beats per minute when exercising. When you are experiencing a threat, your heart rate can go up as high as 172 beats per minute. Oxygen slows the heart.*
3. *Oxygen keeps the prefrontal cortex open. This is the executive functioning of the brain which can help us to remain rational and think logically.*

**Activity:** This activity is optional and can be used at the facilitator's discretion. Using paper doll drawings, participants identify critical body parts related to physiology of anger; adrenal glands and their function; hypothalamus; brain stem and its function; and heart rate changes. Have group members break up in pairs and then:

1. Draw each other's body outline using the favorite color of the individual being traced, in turn.
2. Tape the outlines on wall and personalize drawing including eyes, nose, mouth, hair, clothes, shoes, etc.
3. Draw lungs, heart, adrenal glands, and hypothalamus.
4. Have each participant write somewhere around their drawing three or more things they get angry about.
5. Include three or more healthy and three or more unhealthy things they do to deal with anger feelings.
6. Explain to the group what happens inside our body when we become angry, including increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, increased adrenal secretion, and change in breathing pattern.
7. Reflect and answer any questions.
8. Break into small groups, have group members share their drawings, and ask them to seek feedback from other group members. (If group is small enough, 5–6 in size, or if time permits, have each group member share their drawing with the entire group.)
9. Discuss the value of good nutrition in helping diffuse toxic physiological responses to anger.

You can have crayons or colored pencils on the table for participants to color in their paper dolls, draw facial features, nails, hair, etc., as a well to allow participants to doodle. Ask participants to write three constructive ways to deal with their anger in margins of the of the standard piece of 8.5" x 11" paper used in this example.

## F. Fight, Flight, or Freeze Response (20 minutes)

### Discuss the following:

#### 1. Physiological Response to a Threat

**Explain** that fight, flight, or freeze is the body's physiological response to a threat, whether real or perceived. Remind participants of the importance of breathing and time-outs to diffusing difficult anger and triggering episodes. Explain that more about fight, flight, or freeze will be discussed in future lessons and throughout Phases II and III.

*The body prepares us to either stand our ground and fight or run like hell. If we are survivors of trauma, we tend to freeze and hold our breath, which cuts off oxygen available to the prefrontal cortex and, as a result, our executive brain is not communicating with the brain stem/hypothalamus, which is where we store trauma.*

*Physiological changes that take place with fear and anger are part of our body's preparation to act in a threatening situation, whether by escaping (as in the case of fear) or fighting back (as in the case of anger). Our body's reactions can be very helpful in coping in an emergency, whether it is perceived as terrifying or infuriating. But remaining fearful or angry for long periods of time takes a toll on our bodies and our emotional health. We learn to be fearful of specific things as a result of both cultural perceptions and our own experiences.*

#### 2. Two Powerful Emotions: Anger and Fear

*The physiological responses are quite similar when you are afraid or angry—movement of your stomach and intestines usually stops, interfering with the digestion and absorption of food. (Think about it: are you hungry when you are really scared or really mad?) Your body's metabolism speeds up and the sugar in your blood stream and fats from the body's tissues are burned off at a faster rate. Your salivary glands stop working, causing the feeling of dryness in the mouth. Your sweat glands may overreact, producing sweating forehead, clammy palms, and a cold sweat. Pupils of the eyes may enlarge, producing that wide-eyed look associated with terror and rage. Blood pressure is higher with anger, but the heart rate, breathing, muscle tension, and sweat gland activity increase more when experiencing fear.*

#### 3. Stress and Disease

*Long term stress puts the body in a state of exhaustion. Failure to cope can result in physical and psychological breakdown. Some scientists and medical professionals believe that virtually all diseases are related to emotional stress. Diseases that result from stress include arthritis, asthma, migraine headaches, high blood pressure, angina (which restricts the supply of oxygen to the heart), and ulcers. Strong emotion increases oxygen demands. Stress can also increase a person's susceptibility to infectious diseases by lowering the body's resistance to bacteria and viruses.*

*Stresses of life can also influence psychological functioning. Frequency of stressful life events is associated with feelings of depression, paranoia, aggression, anxiety, distress, and tension. Our emotions can have dramatic effects on our lives, whether it's anger, jealousy, or fear.*

Discuss how stress is less likely to harm people if they have adequate social supports. Friends, family members, and colleagues can be your confidants and can provide help when it is needed. Social supports can reduce the damaging effects on a person's physical, mental, and emotional health.

### III. Closing (10 minutes)

**Close the lesson with a short reading.** You may:

- Read the poem "Take Time" by Martin Greyford.
- Select a poem, meditation, or passage related to the concepts in Lesson 3.
- Ask group participants if they have a closing reading or meditation they would like to share.

**Ask** participants to reflect on what they learned in the lesson.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

### Tips/Suggestions

- Throughout this lesson, emphasize the theme of the connection between the mind, body, and spirit, and how *what* we think and *how* we think has an impact on our physical, emotional, and spiritual selves.
- The Web can be an important resource for this lesson. Familiarize yourself with the resources below and, if possible, display the resources on a large screen for participant viewing. Be prepared to share your screen to display visuals if meeting virtually.

### Resources

- Brady, M. (1991). *Daybreak: Meditations for women survivors of sexual abuse*. Hazelden Publishing.
- Gotter, A. (2020, June 17). *Box breathing*. Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/box-breathing#slowly-exhale>
- Greyford, M. (2016, May 9). *Take Time*. *Poem Hunter*. <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/take-time-15/>
- HeartMath. (2018, May 13). *How stress affects the body*. <https://www.heartmath.com/blog/health-and-wellness/how-stress-affects-the-body/>
- Pietrangelo, A. (2020, March 29). *The effects of stress on your body*. Healthline. <https://www.healthline.com/health/stress/effects-on-body#1>
- Scott, E. (2020, December 12). *Box breathing techniques and benefits*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-and-steps-of-box-breathing-4159900>



## Lesson 4 – Our Parents/Ourselves



### Lesson Purpose

Participants will:

- Learn four common behavioral responses to negative emotions.
- Gain a better understanding of their anger in relation to how their parents modeled their behavior, and understand that anger is a learned behavior.
- Self-identify who, of their primary care providers, they most model their behavior after.
- Come to understand that negative emotions are not bad, and that most of the time they are appropriate.
- Engage in a Purification Ceremony and come to a deeper understanding of the spiritual value of the cultural and traditional practices of smudging in preparation for the Talking Circle, which will become part of each lesson for the remainder of the program.

### Objectives

- Understand the meaning of the Purification Ceremony and its cultural significance, including when this ceremony is performed, why it is done, and the spiritual value of this cultural practice.
- Learn about the preparation for purification and the sacred plants used.
- Learn that the medicine is in the smoke and how applying the smoking sage is referred to as smudging.
- Review Talking Circle guidelines and prepare participants for participating in a Talking Circle during this lesson and in future lessons.

### Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Envelope with slips of paper with feeling words written on them
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Handouts

- Our Parents/Ourselves Activity Worksheet (How I Learned to Deal With My Emotions)
- Trauma Gram Worksheet

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

To begin the session, the facilitator welcomes participants back and leads the following activities:

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participant's names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

#### B. Opening Reading

**Provide an opening reading.** A suggested reading is "Our Parents, Ourselves" by Black Elk.

#### C. Announcements

**Provide announcements and reminders,** as needed, potentially related to assignments from previous lessons or the group schedule (e.g., changes to group meeting times).

#### D. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

### II. Education Material (85 minutes)

#### A. Common Ways of Handling Negative Emotions (15 minutes)

**Begin** the lesson with a question:

**Question:** *How many of you think you are like your parents?*

**Answer:** *Well, whether we like it or not, we are like our parents because a lot of behavior is modeled for us by our parents.*

**Draw** a long line across the paper pad (large pad on the easel) or virtual whiteboard:

\_\_\_\_\_ CONTINUUM \_\_\_\_\_

While you discuss the following content, write down key words and phrases along the continuum, so that participants are able to see the key concepts and take notes.

**Explain** to the group:

*There are four common ways that people generally deal with negative emotions.*

**Denial:**

*At one extreme of the continuum (far left side of easel) are the people who completely deny their feelings. Ask how they feel, and they will say “fine, everything’s good,” and they mean it, no matter what is really going on in their lives. You may be more aware of how these people feel than they do themselves. The inability to express emotions as mentioned last week has been linked with a number of psychosomatic illnesses, such as back aches, migraine headaches, and more.*

**While the conscious mind is unaware of the emotion, the subconscious is painfully aware.** *Since the tension behind the emotion, whether it is grief, anger, or fear cannot be dissipated/released consciously by talking about it or taking some action, the pent-up energy is somatized and expressed throughout the body.*

*What are the benefits of using this response to deal with situations? Why do people choose to deny something negative that is happening in their lives?*

- *They don’t have to feel. It hurts to feel.*
- *They feel emotionally drained or dead.*
- *They worry that if they allow themselves to experience all those feelings at once, they might lose control or go crazy. I know women/men I’ve worked with who are too scared because of what they might do if they let themselves feel.*

**Over-Expression:**

Explain this emotional response by starting at the opposite end of the continuum drawn across the paper pad.

*At the opposite end of the continuum, the opposite of denial is over-expression. This is when you completely fuse with the feeling. Rather than having anger, you become anger. Your emotions take over and you react physically and verbally; the emotion consumes you completely—this is rage or whiteout.*

**Question:** *Why is this dangerous?*

**Answer:** *You’re out of control, the intellect is clouded, and you tend to hold your breath. Perhaps your breathing is very shallow, or you stop breathing and hold your breath without realizing it, even for a few seconds, and shortly thereafter you stop thinking because there is no oxygen going to the brain; you shut off the rational, logical part of the nervous system. You cannot see beyond the immediate emotion.*

*Remember to breathe; the oxygen dilutes the adrenaline and slows the heart. The emotion rage begins with over-expression; you stop breathing and you stop thinking in a rage. Often people cannot remember what they did or said while in a rage.*

*There are also repercussions for over-expressors (e.g., ulcers, high blood pressure, etc.).*

*What are the benefits of over-expression?*

- *You get people’s attention.*
- *You put them on the defensive. They may focus on responding to you, rather than on the inappropriate way you’re communicating when you’re overexpressing.*
- *People know what you’re about—no one has to guess what you’re thinking and feeling.*
- *It’s a way for you to release/discharge, even if inappropriate.*

**Suppression:**

The facilitator will explain this emotional response by writing down key words or phrases to the right of “denial,” the first response discussed.

*This emotion lies midway between denial and over-expression. You suppress feelings that you consciously know are present but don’t think you have any right to experience. You have the feelings but don’t express them. A person might suppress a feeling because it makes them feel self-conscious or uncomfortable. Suppressed emotions are feelings you purposely avoid because you don’t know exactly how to deal with them, such as an emotional conflict.*

**Suppression causes double jeopardy because not only do you feel the pain of the emotion, but you also add the much bigger pain of resisting it.**

*People who repress their feelings are commonly called “stuffers.”*

*Whereas over-expression is exploding on the outside, suppression is imploding on the inside. You stuff; it’s like a volcano effect. You stuff your feelings inside and don’t express them, and you add to that a layer of resentment. It’s like making a cake: You continue to stuff and add the layers of resentment until it turns into over-expression, and you erupt, usually on some innocent person like your child, a friend, or a co-worker. Your emotions are misdirected.*

*People who suppress often are left feeling hopeless and helpless. This way of handling emotions also leads to cancer and other health-related problems. Self-esteem is involved because for whatever reason—could be fear, could be retaliation, could be low self-esteem, and poor self-worth—you don’t think you have the right to express your real feelings.*

*What are the benefits of using the behavior of being a stuffer?*

- *You may believe that nice people suppress their feelings.*
- *These people never say no because they want to be liked.*
- *Suppressing your anger may seem better than over-expressing.*
- *You may think that if no one knows you’re angry, you can manipulate people—stuffers can also have passive-aggressive behaviors.*
- *People don’t have to know how you really feel.*

**Healthy Expression**

The facilitator explains this emotional response last, writing down key words or phrases in the center of the continuum.

*Healthy expression sounds and looks like this . . .*

<b><i>I think</i></b>	<b><i>I feel</i></b>	<b><i>I believe</i></b>
<b><i>I want</i></b>	<b><i>I need</i></b>	<b><i>I don’t need</i></b>
<b><i>I don’t want</i></b>	<b><i>I don’t believe</i></b>	

*Beginning with “I” helps you to take ownership of your feelings because you don’t really have control over others’ feelings and thoughts. People can have a lot taken away from them, but no one can take away your feelings; those are yours. When you begin your sentence with “I,” you are more likely to pay attention to what you’re really trying to say; you tend to speak slower, more mindfully, choosing your words carefully. How many of us really listen to what we are saying, as we are saying it? Try it sometime, more of the time.*

**Recognize, Accept, Share (RAS) Exercise:**

*What are the characteristics of healthy expression?*

For this exercise you will need an envelope with slips of paper inside. The slips have written on them feeling words, such as betrayed, angry, upset, exhausted, irritated, loved, excited, nervous, and understood. Have participants choose a “feeling word” out of the envelope and ask them to do the RAS exercise with the feeling word they’ve chosen from the envelope of random feeling words.

**Read:**

*You are entitled to feel however you are feeling whether or not the emotion is “justified”. Neither you nor anyone else has the right to tell you that you shouldn’t feel the way you do. Negative emotions are a real opportunity to enhance self-understanding. The only truly harmful emotions are emotions that you will not allow yourself or someone else to experience. Negative emotions will not harm you if you express them appropriately and then let them go.*

Begin the exercise by **writing** on the white board:

R – Recognize the feeling

A – Accept/Take ownership for it

S – Share, by talking about it or taking action

Have the women select a piece of paper with a feeling word written on it and follow the steps of RAS. Can they **Recognize** a feeling? Talk about a time they had this emotion, **A**cccepting it, feeling it, and owning it. Finally, have women **S**hare the situation when they were experiencing the feeling on their piece of paper by talking about it.

Have each woman in group select at least one feeling word to practice RAS.

**B. The Myth of Negative Emotions (10 minutes)**

**Read:**

**THE MYTH OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS**

Negative emotions are not bad. They are human. Most of the time they are appropriate. When someone you love dies, there is a time of sadness, grief, and mourning. If you do not allow yourself to experience the pain, it will crop up in other ways and the wound of your loss will not heal. If you get sick, the most natural response is to feel depressed at what you have lost and perhaps angry or frustrated. While you do not have to stay stuck in those feelings, that is where most people start. The natural reaction to hurt is anger. If you do not express it, how can we learn and be taught sensitivity to other people?

Helplessness is associated with illnesses as diverse as ulcers, heart disease, and cancer. Helplessness is an attitude of powerlessness, of victimization.

The only negative emotions are emotions that you will not allow yourself or someone else to experience. Negative emotions will not harm you if you express them appropriately and then let them go—bottling them up is far worse.

The myth of negative emotions is not allowing yourself to experience them, limiting yourself to positive emotions so that negative emotions are the ones you won't allow yourself or anyone else to experience. If you will not allow yourself to experience negative emotions, like fear, pain, or grief, they will crop up in other ways.

Negative emotions are real opportunities for self-understanding. You allow yourself to come to terms with your reactions to yourself and others, to situations. When you try to understand why you feel as you do, then you can progress in self-understanding. When someone takes your remark in the wrong way and feels hurt, there is no point in telling that person they are wrong, but if both parties are willing to accept the feelings and look at what caused it instead, real understanding can take place.

Love and laughter are, of course, key attitudes for healing, but they can only be experienced after we let go of the negative patterns that block their expression.

C. Our Parents/Ourselves Activity (30 minutes)

Facilitators may print the following questions with answer boxes as a handout.

Support participants as they fill out the worksheet; then discuss their answers as a group.

Read:

Identify how your primary caretaker responded to her emotions, e.g., how did your mother respond to negative emotions? Put your answer in box one. What we are asking you is whether you recognize how your mother dealt with her anger or other negative emotions. Because if she was a stuffer and if she was feeling grief or anger, she may have suppressed it.

Question: How does your mother deal with anger?

Question: How does your father deal with anger?

Question: How does your current or past romantic partner respond to anger?

Question: How do you deal with anger?

After participants complete their worksheets, allow each participant to take a turn at responding to the exercise verbally. They don't need to review their whole worksheet. They can share one or more boxes or simply reflect on the activity.

HOW I LEARNED TO DEAL WITH MY EMOTIONS

How did/does my mother deal with her anger?

(Please circle the way that best describes your mother and write one or two sentences to explain)

Denial

Suppression

Over-Expression

Four horizontal lines for writing answers.

How did/does my father deal with his anger?

(Please circle the way that describes your father and write one or two sentences to explain).

Denial

Suppression

Over-Expression

Four horizontal lines for writing answers.

Continued on next page

## HOW I LEARNED TO DEAL WITH MY EMOTIONS (continued)

### How have current or past romantic partners dealt with their anger?

(Please circle the response that describes your romantic partner and write one or two sentences to explain.)

**Denial**

**Suppression**

**Over-Expression**

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### How do I deal with my anger?

(Please circle the response that seems to fit you and write one or two sentences to explain.)

**Denial**

**Suppression**

**Over-Expression**

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### D. Trauma Gram Activity (30 minutes)

The Trauma Gram activity can help the facilitator and participants understand their levels of trauma and the trauma experienced by their families. In addition, the activity helps the facilitator learn about the women's lives and who would be a candidate for Phase III.

This activity is provided to the women while the facilitator explains that this information is only for the facilitator and will help the facilitator understand the personal experiences of each participant. The information will not be read or discussed aloud or shared with other participants; it is intended for the facilitator only.

Explain how the Trauma Gram is to be completed, letting women know they have five minutes to complete. We do not recommend that women take the Trauma Gram home because the information on it could trigger unexpected or negative family responses.

Women begin by reviewing the first row for "You," yourself and check off each source of trauma in their life. "HX" refers to history and "SA" refers to sexual abuse.

**Distribute** the handout on the next page to participants and ask them to complete it.

**Collect** each Trauma Gram before the end of class and keep each individual Trauma Gram for future reference and discussion in individual one-on-one meetings during the course of Phase I. The Trauma Gram will be brought out again in Phase II and Phase III.

There is no group discussion around the Trauma Gram activity.

# TRAUMA GRAM WORKSHEET: ASSESSING FAMILY HISTORY OF TRAUMA

The Trauma Gram can help you better understand your family's trauma and resilience across generations. The tool can help you make sense of how trauma events have impacted your family's individual and interational social, emotional, and physical life. Your responses are confidential. "HX" refers to history and "SA" refers to sexual abuse.

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Age:</b>
<b>Tribe:</b>	<b>Date completed:</b>

	Alcoholism	Drug Addiction	Mental Abuse	Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Adult SA Survivor	Child SA Survivor	Justice System Involvement	Suicide Attempts	HX of Boarding School	HX of Foster Home Placement	HX of SA in Foster Home	HX of SA in Boarding School	Self-harm
														
You														
Your Child 1														
Your Child 2														
Your Child 3														
Your Child 4														
Your Mom														
Your Dad														
Your Grandma														
Your Grandpa														
Your Sister														
Your Brother														
Your Partner														
Your Aunt(s)														
Your Uncle(s)														
Your Cousin(s)														
Your Partner's Parents														

### III. Purification Ceremony: Smudging (30 minutes)

In the fourth week (Lesson 4), the ceremony of smudging is introduced.

#### Read:

*Today we will have the opportunity to smudge; does anybody in the room know what it is?*

Wait for participants to answer. Participants may have engaged in this ceremony and can speak to their experiences of what they understand about this ceremony. You can fill in what may not have been explained about this ceremony.

*Burning sage, cedar, or sweetgrass is a ceremony in which you smudge yourself with the smoke. In this way, you are cleansing yourself of the negativity that can be on you or around you. Other reasons for this ceremony include:*

- *for purification and readiness for prayer, obtaining vision, and giving thanks to the Creator,*
- *for preparation of something you're about to do,*
- *for creating bonds between friends, and*
- *for feeling our connection to the universe.*

*Prayers are always said in every ceremony. In turn, the ceremony is a prayer to the Creator. When we pray, we become part of the sacred circle offering—burning sage, cedar, or sweetgrass.*

*These plants are considered sacred by many Tribes and in turn are considered sacred to the Creator. It is the same for all living things that each of us: humans, plants, and animals are given gifts, talents, and purpose by the Creator. It is our life journey to discover these gifts and to share them with each other, creating balance, and living in harmony.*

*It is used to cleanse or purify the self. It helps us to get clear, get centered. We are talking about our parents and ourselves. Smudging may help get us comfortable with our feelings. It has a calming effect, like incense might do for some people. Some Tribes smudge before a Talking Circle with family or community. Some Tribes smudge before entering a sweat; some do it before entering a new place or environment. It is not a drug; for those in sobriety, when you smell sage, it may smell like marijuana, and I don't want to trigger something. If you choose to smudge this is how you do it.*

*Ah Ho*

**A song will be sung** during this ceremony as the facilitator, co-facilitator, and other participants demonstrate the ritual of smudging. The facilitator, co-facilitator or participants can sing a song familiar to the Tribe of the area or a combination of local and from their own Tribe/Clan or another Tribe/Clan/Band, providing they have permission, know the song, and can explain the meaning of the song. One, two, or three songs can be sung while women are smudging depending upon the size of the group.

**Demonstrate how to light the sage**, explaining that the medicine is in the smoke and demonstrate how to smudge oneself. In future sessions, participants may smudge each other moving around the circle. Another option is for one participant to smudge all the others.

### IV. Talking Circle (45 minutes)

This lesson introduces the Talking Circle, which will remain a centerpiece of group meetings. Additional guidance for leading Talking Circles can be found in the Introduction to this facilitator guide.

Participants will be asked to talk about their parents and to share their feelings, thoughts, and observations from the work done with the Our Parents/Ourselves Activity worksheet. Women will come to understand that the Talking Circle is way of processing feelings in a more culturally relevant manner. Smudging helps us to get comfortable and relaxed.

Facilitators intentionally wait until the fourth lesson because the group does not close until week four, and women have spent three weeks together, getting comfortable with each other and the group. The facilitator may ask participants to share their highest and lowest moments from the week. While each person shares, the facilitator and participants demonstrate active listening techniques. They support one another by offering words of encouragement and sharing similarities and likenesses to their own lives and experiences.

**Explain** the meaning and purpose of the Talking Circle. The following text may be read to participants and used as a guide.

*One of the essential components of group meetings is a check-in time where participants share high and low points from their week. This is done in a Talking Circle format. The Talking Circle is a tool to help foster trust, open sharing, and mutual respect. It is a Native tradition to sit in a circle and talk and share what is in our hearts. The Talking Circle is as old as the culture itself. Traditionally, whoever has the sacred object (for example: an eagle feather, talking stick, or rock) has the floor. This means that no one else should be speaking. In this group's Talking Circles, the group leader or co-leader may speak out of turn to help guide the conversation and provide individual support or response to individual women as they are checking in.*



*"It is a Native tradition to sit in a circle and talk – to share what is in your heart."*

**John Peters (Slow Turtle),  
WAMPANOAG**

*When sharing, if you are open to feedback, you can say that to the other participants when you are done speaking. Other participants may then respond if they choose to. If you don't really want feedback, then you don't have to ask for it. When you are done speaking, we will know that you are finished when you use the words "All my relations." I will call the first participant; when you are finished speaking say, "All my relations," and then please pick who you would like to pass the feather to. Does anybody have any questions before we get started with the Talking Circle? I'm going to pass the feather to (participant name).*

*The Talking Circle is also a listening circle. The Talking Circle allows only one person to talk at a time for as long as they need to talk. So much can be gained by listening.*

*Is it a coincidence that the creator gave us one mouth and two ears? The power of the circle allows the heart to be shared with each other. What we share with each other also heals each other. When we talk about our pain in the circle, it is distributed to the circle, and we are free of the pain. The Talking Circle works because when the people form a circle, the Great Spirit is in the center.*

A potential discussion question for this Talking Circle is: "What did you learn from your parents about anger?"

## **V. Closing (10 minutes)**

**Close the lesson with a short reading.** You may:

- Select a poem, meditation, or passage relevant to Lesson 4.
- Ask group participants if they have a closing reading or meditation they would like to share.

**Ask** participants to reflect on what they learned in the lesson.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

## Tips/Suggestions

- As a reminder, it's best to complete the Trauma Gram worksheet and activity in class, rather than having participants complete the worksheet at home, because the information on it could trigger unexpected or negative family responses.

## Resources

- Traumatology Institute (Canada). (2012). *Traumagram exercise for "What is PTSD? 3 steps to healing trauma"*. WhatIsPTSD.com. <http://www.whatisptsd.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Traumagram-Exercise.pdf>
- Mental Health America. (n.d.). *Helpful vs harmful: Ways to manage emotions*. <https://www.mhanational.org/helpful-vs-harmful-ways-manage-emotions>



## Lesson 5 – Film Related to Anger



### Lesson Purpose

Through the media of film, participants will:

- Recognize healthy and unhealthy expressions of anger.
- Explore whether they identify with a character's anger, behavior, and communication styles.
- Determine whether a character's anger and behavior was justifiable and explore alternatives to violence and ways to move toward resolution.
- Begin to understand the many feelings and behaviors associated with anger and violence, including the consequences of not dealing with issues.

### Objectives

- Identify personal anger issues as represented in film.
- Identify healthy and unhealthy expressions of anger.
- Explore alternatives to violence.
- Identify physiological responses to anger.
- Participate in self-reflection (through the identification of how the participants relate to the characters in the film).
- Understand the potential consequences of not dealing with anger and associated behaviors.

### Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Selected Film, DVD Player, and Screen
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

To begin the session, the facilitator welcomes participants back and leads the following activities:

#### A. Attendance

**The facilitator calls out participant's names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

#### B. Smudging

In Lesson 4, the facilitator led the Purification Ceremony and smudging activity. In this lesson, the facilitator may choose to a) lead the smudging, b) ask a participant to lead the activity, or c) ask participants to smudge the person sitting to their left and then pass the smudging shell to the next group member. With time and practice, participants will become comfortable with smudging one another. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. Facilitators may wish to choose a selection from *Meditations with Native Elders* by Don Coyhis.

#### D. Announcements

**Provide announcements and reminders**, as needed, potentially related to assignments from previous lessons or the group schedule (e.g., changes to group meeting times).

#### E. Review of Previous Lesson

If desired, the facilitator may **review the key components of the previous week's lesson** and ask participants if there any questions about that lesson.

#### F. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

### II. Education Material: Film Viewing (90-120 minutes)

In this lesson, participants watch a film together and then discuss it in a Talking Circle. The facilitator may select a film of their choice or select one of the films listed below. Select a film that depicts characters expressing anger and other emotions with demonstrations of healthy and unhealthy ways of communicating and behaving. Part of the purpose is for participants to realize that they are not alone—issues of domestic violence, drug addiction, trauma, and sexual violence happen in other families and communities, including non-Native communities.

Suggested films include:

- *Clean and Sober*
- *Dominick and Eugene*
- *La Bamba*

- *Radio Flyer* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0105211/>)
- *Our Spirits Don't Speak English: Indian Boarding School* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1770717/>)
- *Powwow Highway*
- *Skins (2002)* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0284494/>)
- *The Wellbriety Journey to Forgiveness*, available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZwF9NnQbWM>
- *What's Love Got to Do with It?*
- *Woman Thou Art Loosed*

Before watching the film, facilitators may wish to prompt participants by sharing the discussion points and questions below for considering while they watch.

### **III. Talking Circle (30-45 minutes)**

Following the film, engage participants in a Talking Circle to debrief and discuss the pertinent issues in the film, encouraging participants also to talk about the high and low points of their week. In the discussion, help participants explore the following issues:

- Recognizing healthy and unhealthy expressions of anger and other negative feelings
- Identifying unhealthy responses to anger and destructive behavior
- Exploring and examining alternatives to violence
- Understanding feelings and behaviors associated with anger and violence, including not dealing with one's own anger and other issues that arise as a result
- The role of counseling and other methods of healing

The facilitator may use the following questions to prompt discussion:

- How did the main characters express their anger?
- What destructive or unhealthy behaviors did the main characters demonstrate in the film?
- What other means did the main characters have, other than a violent reaction?
- Did the main characters demonstrate stuffing their feelings, denying their feelings, or overexpressing?
- Can you identify any physiological symptoms?
- Do you understand your feelings and behaviors when you get angry?
- What character(s) in the film do you relate to?
- Do you think faith or a strong spiritual belief plays a role in healing?
- Do you associate anger with violence?

## IV. Closing (10 minutes)

The facilitator may close with a short reading. Remember to affirm the engagement, participation, and contributions of group members during this week's lesson.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

## Tips/Suggestions

When selecting a film, facilitators should:

- Watch the film in advance to consider if it resonates with you and is likely to resonate with group members.
- Apply what you've learned about the lives of group participants when making the film selection.
- Be cautious when considering films with violent content and consider how violent scenes might affect participants who've experienced trauma.

Facilitators can find many Native-produced videos on YouTube.

## Resources

- Keene, A. (2010, July 12). *The best Native films (by or about Indigenous peoples)*. Native Appropriations. <http://native-appropriations.com/2010/07/the-best-native-films-by-or-about-indigenous-peoples.html>
- Rhinehart, A. (2014, February 6). *The most important movies by Native American filmmakers and artists*. Humanities Washington Blog. <https://www.humanities.org/blog/the-most-important-movies-by-native-american-filmmakers-and-artists/>



## Lesson 6 – Communication Styles



### Lesson Purpose

The primary purpose of this lesson is to learn and recognize the four communication styles presented and to be able to acknowledge which style we most often use. In addition, participants will recognize that we use different styles with different people and which style is dominant when we are under the influence of a substance. Engaging in a role-playing exercise with various communication styles will deepen participant understanding.

### Objectives

- Learn about four communication styles: Passive, Aggressive, Passive-Aggressive, and Assertive.
- Recognize the appropriate communication style for a given situation and be able to model healthy communication in front of their children.
- Understand that by learning and practicing assertive communication skills in their daily interactions with peers and their children, they are enhancing their own and their children's self-confidence and building capacity to communicate in a healthy way.
- Identify participants' level of comfort in communicating in various situations by completing the Assertiveness Quotient.
- Learn about stress reduction techniques.

### Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

### Handouts

- Assertiveness Quotient
- Simple Ways to Relieve Stress
- Friendship Story

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

To begin the session, the facilitator welcomes participants back and leads the following activities:

#### A. Attendance

**The facilitator calls out participant's names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

#### B. Smudging

**Ask participants to smudge** the person sitting to their left and then pass the smudging materials to the next group member. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Provide an opening reading** to prompt thinking about communication styles. A potential reading is the June 23 (p. 197) daily meditation from *A Cherokee Feast of Days: Daily Meditations, Volume 1* by Joyce Hifler.

#### D. Announcements

**Provide announcements and reminders**, as needed, potentially related to assignments from previous lessons or the group schedule (e.g., changes to group meeting times).

#### E. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

### II. Education Material (110 minutes)

#### A. Four Communication Styles (20 minutes)

**Review** the four communication styles:

- 1. ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR** is interpersonal behavior in which a person interacts with others directly and straightforwardly. The person stands for their legitimate rights in such a way that the rights of others are not violated. This type of behavior is an honest, direct, and appropriate expression of one's feelings and opinions. It communicates respect (not deference) for the other person, although not necessarily for that person's behavior.
- 2. PASSIVE BEHAVIOR** is interpersonal behavior which allows a person's rights to be violated by another in one of two ways. First, the person fails to assert themselves when another person deliberately attempts to infringe upon their rights. Second, a person fails to express their feelings and needs, so that another person inadvertently violates them. A passive person inhibits their honest, spontaneous reactions and typically feels hurt, anxious, and sometimes angry as a result. A passive person may waste energy avoiding situations or approaching them indirectly.
- 3. AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR** is interpersonal behavior in which a person stands up for their rights in such a way that they violate the rights of others. The purpose of the aggressive behavior is to humiliate, dominate, or put the other person down rather than to express one's emotions or thoughts.
- 4. PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR** is interpersonal behavior in which individuals appear passive on the surface but are really acting out anger in a subtle, indirect, or behind-the-scenes way. People who develop a pattern of passive-aggressive communication usually feel powerless, stuck, and resentful—in other words, they feel incapable of dealing directly with the object of their resentments. Instead, they express their anger by subtly undermining the object (real or imagined) of their resentments.

The facilitator is encouraged to gather and present materials on each style, including verbal cues, mottos and beliefs, characteristics and confrontation, problem solving, and communication styles. At the end of the lesson, read the description of the communication styles below as a quiz for the participants to see if they can identify which style is being used.

**Discuss** with participants: which communication style does each passage represent?

### COMMUNICATION STYLES

1. I allow other people to make my decisions for me, even though I may later resent them for it. I feel helpless, powerless, and have little self-confidence. I do best when following others and am fearful of taking the initiative in any situation. I often feel sorry for myself and wonder why someone doesn't rescue me from my plight. My body movements are hesitant and tentative. I frequently hold my arms rigid against my body or fold them across my chest. My voice often sounds like a high-pitched "baby doll". I tend to whine. When I face threatening and anxiety provoking situations, I feel I have no control over my anxiety—I feel immobilized. Sometimes my anxiety gets so high that I get a terrible headache.
2. I have the ability to get what I want by indirect means. I have learned my lesson well. I know how to use trickery, seduction, and manipulation to get what I want. These are my "womanly wiles." At times, I am cute and coy. However, when I am angry, I can be very sneaky about getting my revenge. I can be so indirect that the person with whom I am angry may never even know that I was angry or what my anger was about. Actually, I enjoy my games. I often win them. I often have a problem making eye contact with another person. After all, it is more feminine to look away or look down. It is coy and cute to give little side glances and not to look directly at someone for any length of time. When it comes to expressing anger or disapproval, I may do so with a smile on my face. This gives the other person a double message. I consider it feminine and sexy to purr like a kitten. Sometimes I whine when I ask for favors.
3. I am very expressive—and am good at using my skills of expression to humiliate and depreciate the person with whom I am relating. I have been called obnoxious, vicious, and egocentric. I am OK and you definitely are not OK. I speak very loudly, point my finger accusingly, and start my sentences with, "You never do this, or you always do that or why do you always or why do you never..." and so on. I don't bother about an answer—that is unimportant. I am much more interested in throwing my weight around than really finding out about anything. (They've got their nerve, but some people tell me that I am unfeminine. I say that's their problem.)

### B. Activity (45 minutes)

**Lead** the following activity:

#### Part One

**Step 1:** Have the group stand in a circle and have each group member share a non-verbal cue they use to show they're angry (e.g., folding arms across chest indicating that they are closed or angry stare).

**Step 2:** While in the circle have each group member share a verbal cue that lets others know when they are angry.

**Step 3:** Have each group member incorporate the non-verbal and verbal cues and expression described in steps 1 and 2.

**Part Two**

1. Briefly discuss anger styles and divide the group into small groups of two or three.
2. Randomly assign each person an anger style to role play (Passive, Aggressive, Assertive, or Passive-Aggressive).
3. Have each group spend 10 minutes creating a 3-minute role play with each member role playing the anger style they were given.
4. In the large group, share role plays identifying anger styles and discuss.
5. Have participants reenact the scene using healthy assertive behavior to have participants practice healthy expression.
6. Discuss the assertive style as being key to healthy expression and communication.

**C. Assertiveness Quotient Questionnaire (30 minutes)**

**Ask participants to complete the questionnaire; then review and discuss their results.**



## ASSERTIVENESS QUOTIENT

Test your assertiveness quotient (AQ) by completing the following questionnaire. Use the scale below to indicate how comfortable you are with each item.

1. **Makes me very uncomfortable.**    2. **I feel moderately comfortable.**    3. **I am very comfortable with this.**

There may be some situations which are not relevant to you or your particular lifestyle. In such cases, try to image how comfortable you might feel if you were involved in the situation.

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Speaking up and asking questions at a meeting</li> <li>— Commenting about being interrupted by a person, directly to them at the moment they interrupt you</li> <li>— Stating your views to an authority figure (e.g., minister, boss, therapist, father, mother)</li> <li>— Attempting to offer solutions and elaborating on them, speaking in front of a group</li> <li>— Maintaining eye contact, keeping your head upright, and leaning forward when in a personal conversation</li> <li>— Going out with a group of friends when you are the only one without a "date"</li> <li>— Being especially competent using your authority or power without labeling yourself as "impolite, bossy, aggressive or parental"</li> <li>— Requesting expected service when you haven't received it (e.g., in a restaurant or a store)</li> <li>— Being expected to apologize for something and not apologizing since you feel you are right</li> <li>— Requesting the return of borrowed items without being apologetic</li> <li>— Receiving a compliment by saying something assertive to acknowledge that you agree with the person complimenting you</li> <li>— Accepting a rejection</li> <li>— Not getting the approval of the most significant person in your life, discussing another person's criticism of you openly with that person, or telling someone that they are doing something that is bothering you</li> <li>— Refusing to get coffee or to take notes at a meeting, pick up the tab at a restaurant, or open the door for someone just because you are male/female</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Saying "no", refusing to do a favor when you really don't feel like it, or turning down a request for a meeting</li> <li>— Telling a person when you think they are manipulating you</li> <li>— Commenting to a male/female who has made a patronizing remark to you (e.g., "You have a good job for a woman"; "You've got good taste for a man"; "You're not flighty, emotional, or hysterical like most women"; or "You share your feelings more than most men")</li> <li>— Telling a prospective lover about your physical attraction to them before such statements are made to you</li> <li>— Initiating sex with your partner</li> <li>— Showing physical enjoyment of an art show or concert in spite of others' reactions</li> <li>— Asking to be caressed or telling your lover what feels good to you</li> <li>— Expressing anger directly and honestly when you feel angry</li> <li>— Arguing with another person</li> <li>— Telling a joke</li> <li>— Listening to a friend tell a story about something embarrassing</li> <li>— Responding with humor to someone's put-down of you</li> <li>— Disciplining your own children</li> <li>— Disciplining others' children</li> <li>— Explaining the facts of life or your divorce to your child</li> </ul> |
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The AQ test can help you discover the areas where you are not assertive. If you have a predominance of 1's and 2's, you might consider an assertiveness training class to help you become a more spontaneous and honest person. For those of you who have twenty or more 3's, congratulations! You are already an assertive person.

**D. Simple Ways to Relieve Stress (15 minutes)**

**Review ways to relieve stress and ask each participant to identify how they deal with stress and discuss.** Facilitators may develop a handout from the following to guide the activity.

**SIMPLE WAYS TO RELIEVE STRESS**

- |                       |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Watch a sunset        | Go to the beach       | Be positive        |
| Sing a song           | Pet a dog             | Tell a joke        |
| Listen to music       | Blow bubbles          | Take a nap         |
| Dance                 | Take a walk           | Write a letter     |
| Have a cup of tea     | Ask for help          | Smile              |
| Take a break          | Do it now!            | Stretch            |
| Keep a journal        | Hum a tune            | Practice patience  |
| Get up early          | Meditate              | Do Tai Chi         |
| Play a drum           | Prioritize            | Give a hug         |
| Throw a ball          | Play with a child     | See a movie        |
| Plant a flower        | Say "No"              | Set limits         |
| Eat a snack           | Read a book           | Practice kindness  |
| Light a candle        | Laugh out loud        | Lie in the sun     |
| Walk in the rain      | Run in the park       | Talk to a friend   |
| Take a bubble bath    | Avoid negative people | Take a deep breath |
| Ask for what you need | Go to bed on time     | Walk a labyrinth   |
| Give a compliment     | Clean a closet        | Go barefoot        |
| Give a blessing       | Watch a sunrise       | Say a prayer       |

**Write 5 ways you deal with stress:**

- 1.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5.

### III. Talking Circle (50 minutes)

The facilitator leads a Talking Circle for participants to share the high and low points of their week and provide support for one another. When they are done sharing, participants say, "All my relations" and pass the eagle feather to the next person. The facilitator may also lead the group in a deep breathing exercise.

### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

**Close the lesson with a short reading.** You may:

- Read the story about friendship provided below.
- Review your Tribe's traditional Tribal values and how they relate to this lesson.
- Select a different poem, meditation, or passage relevant to Lesson 6.
- Ask group participants if they have a closing reading they would like to share.
- Ask participants to reflect on what they learned in the lesson.

#### FRIENDSHIP

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

This first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally, the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there. A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one."

Friends are very rare jewels, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share words of praise, and they always want to open their heart to us.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

### Tips/Suggestions

- When discussing or modeling unhealthy communication styles, remember to conclude exercises with explanations and demonstrations of healthy modes of communication before moving on.

## Resources

- Alvernia University. (2018, March 27). *4 types of communication styles*. Communication Articles. <https://online.alvernia.edu/articles/4-types-communication-styles/>
- Maloney, M. E., & Moore, P. (2019). From aggressive to assertive. *International Journal of Women's Dermatology*, 6(1), 46–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijwd.2019.09.006>
- Mayo Clinic Staff. (2020, May 29). *Being assertive: Reduce stress, communicate better*. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/assertive/art-20044644>
- UK Violence Intervention and Prevention Center. (n.d.). *The four basic styles of communication*. University of Kentucky. [https://www.uky.edu/hr/sites/www.uky.edu.hr/files/wellness/images/Conf14\\_FourCommStyles.pdf](https://www.uky.edu/hr/sites/www.uky.edu.hr/files/wellness/images/Conf14_FourCommStyles.pdf)



# Lesson 7 – Societal Anger



## Lesson Purpose

Participants will gain a deeper understanding of historical trauma as it relates to the Indigenous people of Southeast Alaska as well as the history and treatment of Tribes across the U.S. They will be able to examine Indigenous worldviews and the Western worldview. As participants gain an understanding of historical genocide and oppression of Native Americans/Alaska Natives, they will learn the impact these experiences have on anger, feelings, and behaviors and the grief that results from intergenerational trauma.

## Objectives

- Understand where our patterns and behaviors in dealing with anger originate.
- Learn about the historical genocide and oppression of Native Americans and the impact of colonialism.

## Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Handouts

- Traditional Native Values and Non-Traditional Values

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

To begin the session, the facilitator welcomes participants back and leads the following activities:

#### A. Attendance

**The facilitator calls out participant's names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

**B. Smudging**

**Ask participants to smudge** the person sitting to their left and then pass the smudging materials to the next group member. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning.

**C. Opening Reading**

**Deliver the opening reading or ask a participant to read.** A potential reading is the June 3 (p. 177) daily meditation from *A Cherokee Feast of Days: Daily Meditations, Volume 1* by Joyce Hifler.

You may also choose to read the Prayer of the Four Directions:

**Oh Great Spirit of the North**

We come to you and ask for the strength and the power to bear what is cold and harsh in life.

We come like the buffalo ready to receive the winds that truly can be overwhelming at times.

Whatever is cold and uncertain in our life, we ask you to give us the strength to bear it. Do not let the winter blow us away.

Oh Spirit of life and Spirit of the North we ask you for strength and for warmth.

**Oh Great Spirit of the East**

We turn to you where the sun comes up, from where the power of light and refreshment come. Everything that is born comes up in this direction—the birth of babies, the birth of the puppies, the birth of ideas, and the birth of friendship. Let there be the light.

Oh Spirit of the East, let the color of fresh rising in our life be glory to you.

**Oh Great Spirit of the South**

Spirit of all that is warm and gentle and refreshing, we ask you to give us this Spirit of growth, of fertility, of gentleness, of love and compassion for our fellow human beings.

Caress us with a cool breeze when the days are hot. Give us seeds that the flowers, trees, and fruits of the earth may grow. Give us the warmth of good friendships.

Oh Spirit of the South, send the warmth and the growth of your blessings.

**Oh Great Spirit of the West**

Where the sun goes down each day to come up the next, we turn to you in praise of sunsets and in thanksgiving for changes. You are the great colored sunset of the red west which illuminates us. You are the powerful cycle which pulls us to transformation.

We ask for the blessings of the sunset. Keep us open to life's changes.

Oh Spirit of the West, when it is time for us to go into the earth, do not desert us, but receive us in the arms of our loved ones.

## D. Announcements

**Provide announcements and reminders**, as needed, potentially related to assignments from previous lessons or the group schedule (e.g., changes to group meeting times).

## E. Review of Previous Lesson

If desired, the facilitator may **review the key components of the previous week's lesson** and ask participants if there any questions about that lesson.

## F. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

# II. Education Material (80 minutes)

## A. What is *historical trauma*? (30 minutes)

It will be helpful to assemble materials for presenting on this topic to supplement the definitions and information provided below.

### Read:

*Historical trauma is cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations (Brave Heart, 1995, 1998) resulting from group tragedies such as the Wounded Knee Massacre of hundreds of unarmed Lakota men, women, and children in 1890 and the forced removal and placement of children in abusive boarding schools. These schools disrupted families and destroyed traditional Native parenting. This includes trauma within one's lifespan.*

**Historical Unresolved Grief:** *The grief that results from intergenerational trauma.*

**Historical Trauma Response:** *A constellation of characteristics in reaction to traumatic Native history, similar to what other massive group trauma survivors experience; the response includes depression, self-destructive behavior, substance abuse, identification with ancestral pain, fixation on trauma, physical symptoms, anxiety, guilt, and chronic bereavement.*

*What are the results of this historical trauma?*

- *Premature death rates are higher than those for African Americans, with 31% of deaths occurring before 45 years of age for some Native groups (Indian Health Service, 1995).*
- *The suicide death rate for some Natives is 27.9%, which is more than twice the average for the general United States population.*
- *The suicide attempt rate is as high as 7 times the general population on some reservations/villages.*
- *The alcoholism death rate is more than 10 times the national average in some Native communities.*
- *Health conditions associated with trauma and stress, such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes, are almost twice the national average for many Native people.*

### **Kinship Care:** *Traditional Values and Contemporary Practice*

*Kinship care, as it is practiced in child welfare today, has existed as an integral practice in traditional Native American cultures for centuries. Long before the development of formal American social service and foster care systems, Native social structures provided for their vulnerable populations. Children who became orphaned or abandoned were cared for by means of familial, clan, or other relationships. These relationships continue to have significance in contemporary Tribal practices and are relevant in the formal foster care system and practiced in Native communities today. In contrast to the early practice of focusing on deficits, this perspective examines the inherent strengths of traditional Native structures and culture. This perspective compares traditional Native child welfare practices with contemporary programming.*

**B. Women Are the Backbone of the People (20 minutes)**

**Read:**

*“The honor of the people lies in the moccasin tracks of the woman. Walk the good road . . . be dutiful, respectful, gentle, and modest my daughter . . .*

*Be strong with the warm, strong heart of the earth.*

*No people go down until their women are weak and dishonored, or dead upon the ground.*

*Be strong and sing the strength of the Great Powers within you, all around you.”*

**—Village Wise Man, SIOUX**

*The Elders say the Native American women will lead the healing among the Tribes.*

*We need to especially pray for our women and ask the Creator to bless them and give them strength.*

*Inside them are the powers of love and strength given by the Moon and the Earth.*

*When everyone else gives up, it is the women who sing the songs of strength.*

*She is the backbone of the people.*

*So, to our women we say, sing your songs of strength; pray for your special powers; keep our people.*

If the Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Well-Being of the Women is intact, so too is that of the Family, Community, and Society.

**C. Traditional Native Values and Non-Traditional Values (30 minutes)**

**Review and discuss** the following handout:

## TRADITIONAL NATIVE VALUES AND NON-TRADITIONAL VALUES

### Traditional

listening/observation skills	self-exploratory in child's life
cooperation	restitution
religion-way of life	character = status
group emphasis	bilingualism
indirect criticism	belief in the unseen
modesty, humility	illness = imbalance
individual autonomy	traditional oriented
orientation to present	cooperation with nature
passivity, calmness	spiritual, mystical
generosity	personal caution
extended family	
cultural pluralist	

### Non-Traditional

verbal skills	assimilation
competition	strict discipline
religion-segment of life	punishment
individual emphasis	degree = status
direct criticism	monolinguals
self-importance	believe in the seen
interference/involvement	illness = physical or mental
orientation to future	process oriented
activity, restlessness	control over nature
savings	skeptic
nuclear family	personal openness

What's confusing to many non-Natives about Alaska Natives? Many perceive that:	What's confusing to many Alaska Natives about non-Natives? Many perceive that:
They look down or away.	They stare straight at your eyes.
They often say little. They are slow to answer questions. They keep silent in group situations.	They talk too much. They talk so fast. They always talk first. They chatter. They interrupt.
They avoid situations involving talking to strangers. They only talk freely to close acquaintances.	They talk to strangers and people they don't know. They come right over and want to give you a firm handshake as if you're good friends.
They play down their own abilities. They never say anything about themselves. They don't always seem to like being given compliments in public.	They brag about themselves. They don't give others a chance to talk. They give compliments in public.
They approach things globally.	They're often linear, direct, and explicit. They say: "give it to me straight"; "straight talk"; and "don't beat around the bush".
They act as if they expect things to be give to them.	They don't help people even when they can.
They don't plan (in the way that non-Natives see or understand).	They always talk about what's going to happen later. They think they can predict the future.
They avoid direct questions. They never start a conversation. They talk off the topic.	They ask too many questions, some of which are intrusive and personal. They interrupt a lot. They only talk about what they are interested in.
They are slow to take a turn in talking. They are indirect, and inexplicit. They don't make sense. They take too long to answer a question. They give one-word answers.	They just go on and on when they talk. They aren't careful when they talk about people or things.
They just leave without saying anything.	They have to say 'goodbye' even when they can see that you are leaving.

### III. Talking Circle (80 minutes)

The facilitator leads a Talking Circle for participants to share the high and low points of their week and provide support for one another. When they are done sharing, participants say, "All my relations" and pass the eagle feather to the next person. The facilitator may also lead the group in a deep breathing exercise.

In this lesson's Talking Circle, participants discuss their understanding of genocide and the history of what happened; onset of colonization; damage of boarding schools; and other main themes that are identified.

### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

- Close the lesson with a short reading. You may:
  - » Review your Tribe's traditional Tribal values and how they relate to this lesson.
  - » Select a different poem, meditation, or passage relevant to Lesson 7.
  - » Ask group participants if they have a closing reading they would like to share.

Ask participants to reflect on what they learned in the lesson.

At the end of each lesson, the facilitator asks participants to write comments describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on sticky notes and placed in a shoe box. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

## Tips/Suggestions

If the film selected in Lesson 5 addresses issues related to historical trauma, the facilitator can reference concepts from the film in this lesson.

## Resources

- Administration for Children & Families. (n.d.). *Resource guide to trauma-informed human services*. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/trauma-toolkit>
- Brave Heart, M. Y. (2003). The historical trauma response among natives and its relationship with substance abuse: A Lakota illustration. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 35(1), 7–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.2003.10399988>
- Brave Heart, M. Y., Chase, J., Elkins, J., & Altschul, D. B. (2011). Historical trauma among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: Concepts, research, and clinical considerations. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 43(4), 282–290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02791072.2011.628913>
- Nahulu, L., Roessel, M. H., Sahl, S. (2021). *Stress & trauma toolkit for treating Indigenous people in a changing political and social environment*. American Psychiatric Association. <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/stress-and-trauma/indigenous-people>
- NCAI Policy Research Center. (2015). *Resilience & trauma: A backgrounder*. Washington, DC: National Congress of American Indians. <https://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications/Backgrounder-Resilience.pdf>
- Pember, M. A. (2016). *Intergenerational trauma: Understanding Natives' inherited pain*. Indian Country Today Media. <https://amber-ic.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ICMN-All-About-Generations-Trauma.pdf>



# Lesson 8 – Anger as a Secondary Emotion



## Lesson Purpose

Participants will learn the distinction between primary and secondary emotions and how anger is a secondary emotion that often masks underlying feelings known as primary emotions. Primary emotions are the ones we want to communicate as these are true and accurate feelings that the individual is experiencing but having difficulty identifying or is unaware of and, in both cases, not communicating effectively.

## Objectives

- Learn about primary and secondary emotions and that anger is considered a secondary emotion.
- Explore and discuss how various emotions are often expressed as anger.
- Learn how anger is used to mask other feelings.

## Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Slips of Paper for Primary Feelings Commonly Turned Into Anger Activity
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Handouts

- Primary Feelings Commonly Turned Into Anger
- “I” Statement Communication Exercise Handout

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

To begin the session, welcome participants back and lead the following activities:

*Welcome back everyone. And I want to say how proud I am of each and every one of you because this is hard work. It takes a lot of mental energy to go through some of the emotional work you are taking a part in, so I want to commend you all for being here tonight.*

### A. Attendance

**The facilitator calls out participant's names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

### B. Smudging

**Ask participants to smudge** the person sitting to their left and then pass the smudging materials to the next group member. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning.

### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read.

### D. Announcements

**Provide announcements and reminders**, as needed, potentially related to assignments from previous lessons or the group schedule (e.g., changes to group meeting times).

### E. Review of Previous Lesson

If desired, the facilitator may **review the key components of the previous week's lesson** and ask participants if there any questions about that lesson.

### F. Read Lesson Purpose

In addition to reviewing the lesson purpose for Lesson 8, inform participants that this lesson will begin with a brief review of lessons 2–7.

## II. Review of Weeks 2–7 (40 minutes)

In Lesson 8 the facilitator takes participants through a review of the previous weeks' lessons. Be sure to address the following key topics:

### Week 2 - Cycle of Violence

- Violence is about power and control.
- **The bud:** This is where you begin to feel your anger start to build. It starts with a precipitating event, which means there is something going on that not only has your attention, but you realize you are starting to get upset, uncomfortable, or angry over. This is also called the tension-building phase because the angrier we get, the more energy builds. This is also where you can choose to escalate the situation or de-escalate it. We all know what can happen when we choose to escalate a situation. The thing we might not realize is that **our self-talk** is what feeds the fire. An example: A mother is running late for a doctor's appointment for one of her kids, let's say they are ages 4 and 1: She has to catch the bus and maybe wasn't aware of her time management habits and finds herself having to hurry so she doesn't miss it. She is hurrying as best as she can, but then her 4-year-old decides to throw a tantrum while she's trying to dress him. He's not listening and is crying and whining, until finally his mom gets angry enough and yells at him. This only makes him cry harder and so now he's throwing a bigger tantrum. Well, this leads us right into our next stage, "the blast."

- **The blast:** At this point, mom's anger may have built to the point that she's not aware that it needs to be released because she's at her breaking point. She finally explodes with a violent act. She may say, "You see what you made me do! You make me so angry!", worsening the damage by blaming the child for her own behavior.
- **The honeymoon:** At the same time, she may have been immediately remorseful, realize the damage she's done, and may apologize and say it'll never happen again. She may honestly believe that it won't happen again and so she's sincere in her apology.
- The thing to remember about this is it is a blaming cycle—the Batterer is upset over whatever, blames and hits the victim, who in turn hits the kids, then the kids end up learning to hit the dog, etc.
- Characteristics of Batterer

### **Week 3 – Physiology of Anger**

- The Anger Scale
- The Bud is when we can transform our energy (0–3 Rule).
- We can break the cycle of anger.
- Understand what happens to our bodies when we're angry
- Three things that make us angry
- Three destructive/unhealthy ways we deal with that anger
- Three constructive/healthy ways we can deal with that anger

### **Week 4 – Our Parents/Ourselves**

- Whether we like it or not, we are like our parents.
- We talked about suppressing/stuffing our anger; you identified the risks and benefits of the four common ways that people respond to negative emotions.
- Overexpression/exploding 0-10
- Characteristics of healthy expression: RAS
  - R** – Recognize the feeling
  - A** – Accept ownership for it
  - S** – Share by talking about it or taking action to physically release or channel the energy in a productive/healthy way.

### **Week 5 – Film Related to Anger**

- We discussed how you related/connected with the characters in the movie.

### **Week 6 – Communication Styles**

- Anger styles: Passive, Aggressive, Passive/Aggressive, Assertive
- Assertive person: Someone who sticks up for themselves in a strong but kind way. They are firm but fair, non-judgmental, open, and flexible in their confrontation style. They explore alternatives, look at options, negotiate, and don't let negative feelings build up. They use "I" statements.

**Week 7 – Societal Anger**

- Societal anger and historical trauma
- How societal anger fits into why we are the way we are
- If you have been affected by violence, grew up with violence, been in a violent relationship, been victimized at some point in your life, then this is the right place to be.
- The goal is non-violent behavior and learning healthy ways to communicate.

**III. Education Material (70 minutes)**

**A. Identify and communicate your underlying feelings (25 minutes)**

Explain how anger is often considered a secondary emotion because it is used to mask other feelings.

*Anger is like a signal. It is telling us that something is wrong and therefore we should be paying attention to it. A lot of people are uncomfortable with anger and will try and stuff the feeling or will run from it or try and ignore it or deny it. Anger is often used as a mask to hide our true or underlying feelings. This is because anger is a secondary emotion—anger does not come first, rather the primary emotion(s) are lying underneath the anger. If we imagined anger was like a blanket and we lifted up the blanket, we would be revealing the primary feelings that are beneath. Often, we may not even be aware of our primary emotion(s). If we are unaware or unskilled communicators, we may not be able to communicate what is really going on with us, what we are truly feeling: the emotion under the anger.*

The facilitator may make a handout from this list or share the list on screen.

*Here’s a list of feelings which commonly underlie anger. Are there any emotions that surprise you? Can you relate to any of these feelings?*

Fear	Worry	Anxiety
Regret	Insecurity	Disappointment
Hurt	Sadness	Helplessness
Grief	Loneliness	Powerlessness
Shame	Guilt	Embarrassment
Envy	Jealousy	Alienation
Discouragement	Frustration	Impatience
Disgust	Despair	Hopelessness
Confusion	Panic	Rejection

The facilitator tells a story that emphasizes a primary and secondary emotion. You may choose to provide your own story or use one of the following examples.

A little boy is playing with his ball in the front yard. While playing, the ball slips from his hand and starts to roll down the driveway, so he runs after it. The parent sees her son chasing the ball into the street and starts running after him. When she catches up to him, she gives him a swat on his bottom, and in a scolding tone says, “What are you doing? Don’t you know how dangerous this is? You could have gotten hit by a car!” as opposed to communicating a primary feeling, which is underneath the anger. How different might it have been had Mom expressed her primary emotion when she caught up to her son. Instead of swatting him, she might have hugged him and said, “That was so scary. I was afraid that when you started chasing your ball you were going to run into the street. And I was afraid there was going to be a car. I’m so glad you’re safe!”

After class a woman walks alone to her parked car. It's dark out, after 9:00 pm. She walks among homeless and indigent people in a downtown neighborhood of a big city. She witnesses drug deals. It's a rough neighborhood, scary to be in at night. To mask her fear, the woman would act as though she were experiencing a mental episode wherein she would have an argument out loud with herself. The closer she got to unsavory people and scary situations, the louder she would become in having an argument with herself, "You shut up! No, you shut up." In this example, the woman chose to mask her primary emotion of fear and insecurity with anger as a way to protect herself. She knew that people would back off from someone who was acting irrational.

The facilitator leads discussion:

*How do you think the child would have felt about himself in these two different responses? In the first instance, the child feels bad about himself, thinking he did something wrong and is getting in trouble for it. He has made his mother mad. In the second instance, he realizes he is loved by his mother, and she was afraid for him. He is not in trouble; he is loved.*

*What we communicate and how we communicate has an impact on people.*

## B. Activities: Primary Feelings Commonly Turned Into Anger (35 minutes)

### Activity #1

Explain to participants the core of the activity:

*Using the list of primary emotions, please describe a situation where you expressed anger that was covering up a primary emotion. Using "I" statements, describe how you would communicate your primary feeling(s).*

Distribute paper and pens/pencils and have participants write down their statements. Then discuss.

Each participant will have the opportunity to communicate a primary feeling that was being covered up by anger. You should be ready to provide an example:

*I was really mad at my boyfriend and started an argument with him. What I was really feeling was that I was ignored by him.*

*"I" Statement: "I feel ignored by you lately. I know you've been busy at work, but I need some quality time with you."*

Another example:

*Your boyfriend is acting disrespectfully and accusing you of flirting at a party. What's underneath his anger? And how can he communicate this to you using "I" statements.*

When conducted as an in-class activity, have a list of primary feelings that participants can refer to up on the board or shared screen.

### Activity #2

You can conduct this activity at this time or include it in the Talking Circle portion of the lesson. The list of emotions below can be printed to prepare slips of paper activity. To prepare:

1. Copy the list below to a Word document.
2. Enlarge the font to make each word legible.
3. Print the sheet.

4. Use scissors to cut each word into an individual slip of paper.
5. Put the pieces of paper into a cup, envelope, or box.

In an effort to simplify, you can let participants know that as they begin to understand and identify what primary feelings are, you may narrow anger responses down to two primary feelings. "I will bet you a hundred bucks that what's underneath your anger is either going to be one of these two primary emotions: "Fear or Emotional Pain (i.e., hurt)."

During the session:

1. Have group members, in turn, draw one piece of paper, name the feeling, and share a time when they experienced the feeling.
2. Allow group members the opportunity to discuss and process thoughts, feelings, and issues.

**Primary Feelings Commonly Turned Into Anger**

Abandoned	Fearful	Lazy	Scared
Alone	Foolish	Left out	Selfish
Angry	Frantic	Lonely	Shocked
Annoyed	Free	Lost	Shy
Anxious	Frightened	Loved	Silly
Ashamed	Frustrated	Loving	Small
Awesome	Furious	Mad	Smug
Bad	Good	Mean	Sneaky
Beautiful	Glad	Miserable	Startled
Big	Gloomy	Moody	Strong
Bold	Guilty	Nervous	Stupid
Bored	Happy	Nice	Sure
Brave	Helpful	Open	Talkative

Continued on next page

Calm	Helpless	Overwhelmed	Tense
Cheated	Homesick	Panicked	Terrible
Clever	Horrible	Passive	Terrified
Closed	Humiliated	Peaceful	Threatened
Compassionate	Hurt	Picked on	Tired
Confused	Ignored	Playful	Trapped
Cruel	Impatient	Pleased	Troubled
Curious	Inadequate	Pretty	Ugly
Different	Independent	Proud	Uncertain
Discounted	Insecure	Quiet	Unhappy
Discouraged	Insulted	Rejected	Unloved
Embarrassed	Invisible	Relaxed	Upset
Energetic	Isolated	Relieved	Violent
Excited	Jealous	Restless	Vulnerable
Exhausted	Joyous	Sad	Wonderful
Fantastic	Kind	Safe	Worried

**C. Deep Breathing Exercise: (10 minutes)**

*Before we start the Talking Circle, let's practice our deep breathing exercise. Would one of you be willing to lead us in a deep breathing exercise please?*

If no participant volunteers to lead the deep breathing exercise, then the facilitator takes participants through the exercise: Ask the women to close their eyes, relax, and take in a deep breath. Read off some simple ways to relieve stress [p. 113]: Watch a sunset; pet a dog; take a walk; tell a joke; stretch; see a movie; talk to a friend; say a prayer; give a blessing; play a drum; eat a snack; walk in the rain; take a bubble bath; have a cup of tea; play with a child; read a book; lie in the sun; light a candle.

#### IV. Talking Circle (50 minutes)

The facilitator leads a Talking Circle for participants to share the high and low points of their week and provide support for one another. Participants say “All my relations” when they are done sharing and pass the eagle feather to the next person.

*As we start our Talking Circle check ins, what I would like you to include when checking in: What constructive ways did you deal with stress this week? Who would like to start first?*

#### V. Closing (10 minutes)

Close the lesson with a short reading. You may:

- Read “To Let Go Takes Love,” a poem by Robert Paul Gilles, Jr.
- Select a different poem, meditation, or passage relevant to Lesson 8.
- Ask participants if they have a closing reading or meditation they would like to share.
- Review your Tribe’s traditional Tribal values and how they relate to this lesson.
- Ask participants to discuss what traditional Tribal values were addressed in this week’s lesson.
- Ask participants to reflect on what they learned in the lesson.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform’s chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

#### Tips/Suggestions

- When having discussions, meeting time can pass very quickly. Part of the role of the facilitator is to manage the group’s time. Facilitators can allow the Talking Circle to take as much time as needed when they recognize that it’s a healthy use of time and participants will benefit from sharing their feelings. Participants will become aware that checking-in is a process, and they can take as long as they need, but to be mindful of group time.

#### Resources

- Therapist Aid. (2019). *Anger iceberg* [Worksheet]. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/anger-iceberg>
- Therapist Aid. (2017). *“I” Statements* [Worksheet]. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/i-statements>



# Lesson 9 – Healthy and Unhealthy Communication



## Lesson Purpose

Participants will learn about Virginia Satir’s work in identifying the five patterns of healthy and unhealthy communication, examining the difference between double-level messages and single-level messages. They will engage in role playing the four patterns: (1) Placating, (2) Blaming, (3) Computing, and (4) Distracting. They also will identify patterns they recognize in themselves and which patterns were modeled in their family.

## Objectives

- Understand Virginia Satir’s dysfunctional communication patterns.
- Recognize the connection between poor self-worth, low self-esteem, and the need to use double-level communication patterns as a result.

## Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Handouts

- “Autobiography in Five Short Chapters,” poem by Portia Nelson

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

To begin the session, the facilitator welcomes participants back and leads the following activities:

#### A. Attendance

**The facilitator calls out participant’s names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

## B. Smudging

**Ask participants to smudge** the person sitting to their left and then pass the smudging materials to the next group member. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning.

## C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading or ask a participant to read.**

## D. Announcements

**Provide announcements and reminders**, as needed, potentially related to assignments from previous lessons or the group schedule (e.g., changes to group meeting times).

## E. Review of Previous Lesson

If desired, the facilitator may **review the key components of the previous week's lesson** and ask participants if there any questions about that lesson.

## F. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

# II. Education Material (115 minutes)

## A. Four Dysfunctional Patterns of Communication (115 minutes)

Virginia Satir was a family therapist who used five communication categories to identify behavior.

The facilitator uses visual aids to illustrate the four dysfunctional patterns of communication using poster-size diagrams on the wall of: The Placater, The Blamer, The Computer, and The Distracter. These illustrations are available in the book, *Peoplemaking* by Virginia Satir.

Participants will recognize the connection between poor self-worth, low self-esteem, and the need to use double-level communication patterns as a result. One diagram posted on the wall illustrates double-level messages; another poster describes the fifth response: Levelling, as a healthy communication pattern and the fears that keep us from leveling.

The facilitator provides a scenario where a family deals with a problem and has group participants act out each of the four unhealthy communication patterns and discuss how they felt in their roles.

Participants engage in a "Leveling" exercise.

**Begin with an introduction to Virginia Satir's work:**

**PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION**

**Virginia Satir**

After thirty years of listening to literally thousands of interactions among people, Satir gradually became aware of certain seemingly universal patterns in the way people communicated.

Whenever there was any stress, over and over again Satir observed four ways people have of handling it. These four patterns occurred only when someone was reacting to stress and at the same time felt their self-esteem was involved. In other words, their self-esteem got hooked into the interaction. The presence of stress alone does not need to hook your self-esteem. Stress might be painful or annoying, but that isn't the same as doubting your own worth.

The four patterns of communication are: placating, blaming, computing, and distracting. Satir observed that a person's self-esteem became hooked more easily when a person had not really developed a solid appreciative sense of their own worth. When someone does not have a positive sense of himself or herself, they rely on others to define who they are; this is also a characteristic of a codependent individual. Typically, it's easy for anyone with doubts about his own worth to fall into this trap.

Do any of you know your internal feelings when your self-esteem gets hooked? When mine does, my stomach gets knots, my muscles get tight, and I find myself holding my breath. While all this is going on, I find that my thoughts concern this self-esteem dialogue I'm having with myself. I am believing that I am unloved, that I can never do anything right, that I'm nothing. The descriptive words for this condition (what's showing on the outside) are embarrassment, anxiousness, and incompetence. What I say at this point might be quite different from anything I am feeling or thinking. If I feel the only way out of my dilemma/situation is to make things right with you, so you will think I am lovable and good again, I will say whatever I think would fit. It would not matter if it were true or not. What matters is my survival, and I have put that in your hands.

Suppose, instead, I keep my survival in my hands. Then when my self-esteem is hooked, I can say straight out what I think and feel. True, I might feel some initial pain at exposing my "weaknesses" and taking the risk that I believe goes with that, but I avoid the greater pain of hurting myself physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and spiritually, as well as avoiding giving you double-level messages.

**Discuss double-level messages and four dysfunctional patterns of communication:**

**Double-Level Messages**

A double-level message is when your voice is saying one thing but the rest of you is saying something else.

Verbal communication = words

Body/sound communication =

- Facial expression
- Body position
- Breathing tempo

- Muscle tonus
- Voice tone

What we are essentially talking about in these four patterns of communication are double-level messages. In all four instances, your voice is saying one thing and the rest of you is saying something else. Now imagine you are interacting with someone who also communicates with double-level messages. Usually, the results of your interactions will be hurtful and unsatisfactory. Double-level messages come through when:

1. You have low self-esteem and feel you are bad because you feel this way about yourself.
2. You feel fearful about hurting another person's feelings.
3. You worry about retaliation from the other person.
4. You fear rupture of the relationship.
5. You do not want to impose.
6. You do not attach any significance to the other person or the interaction itself.

In all of these instances, the person is unaware that they are giving double-level messages. Generally, a person will have four different ways to respond to your double-level message. They can 1) pick up the words and ignore the rest; 2) pick up the non-word part and ignore the words; 3) choose to ignore the whole message by changing the subject or breaking off communication altogether; or 4) they can comment on the double-level nature of your message.

For example, if I have a smile on my face and the words, "I feel terrible," come out of my mouth, how will you respond? Picking up on the possibilities just mentioned, you might respond to the words only and say, "that's too bad", to which I can respond, "I was just kidding." Your second choice is to respond to the smile and say, "you look great," in which case I can say, "how can you say that!" Your third choice is to ignore the whole thing and go back to your paper, in which case I would respond, "what's the matter? Don't you care about me?" Your fourth choice is to comment on my double message: "I don't know what you're telling me. You're smiling, yet you tell me you're feeling bad. What gives?" In which case I have a chance to respond, "I didn't want to impose on you," and so on.

Healthy communication using single levels of meaning leads to realness, or being straight, which leads to trust and love that, nourish members of the family or the couple or co-workers. Remember that what goes on in a moment in time between two people has many more levels than are visible on the surface. The surface represents only a small portion of what is going on, much in the same way that only a very small part of an iceberg is visible.

People use these universal patterns of response to get around the threat of rejection. In all cases, the individual is feeling and reacting to the threat, but because you don't want to reveal your "weakness" you attempt to conceal your feelings in the following ways.

1. Placate, so the other person doesn't get mad.
2. Blame, so the other person will regard you as strong.
3. Compute, with the resultant message that you are attempting to deal with the threat as though it were harmless; you are trying to establish your self-worth by using big words.
4. Distract, so you ignore the threat, behaving as though it were not there (maybe if you do this long enough, it really will go away).

**PLACATER**

Placate so the other person doesn't get mad.

<b>Words are agreeable</b>	"Whatever you want is okay. I am just here to make you happy."
<b>Body placates</b>	"I am helpless."
<b>Insides</b>	"I feel like a nothing; without him I am dead. I am worthless."

The placater always talks in an ingratiating way, trying to please, apologizing, never disagreeing, no matter what. He's a "yes man." She talks as though she could not do anything for herself; she must always get someone to approve of her. You think of yourself as really worth nothing when acting this role. You are lucky just to be allowed to eat. You are responsible for everything that goes wrong. You're trying always to be good enough.

To get yourself into the mood for this role: Be the most syrupy, martyrish, bootlicking person you can be. When you talk in this position your voice will be whiny and squeaky because you keep your body in such a lowered position that you don't have enough air to project a rich, full voice. You will be saying "yes" to everything, no matter what you think or feel.

**BLAMER**

Blame so the other person will regard you as strong.

<b>Words are disagreeable</b>	"You never do anything right. What is the matter with you!"
<b>Blames</b>	"I am the boss around here."
<b>On the inside</b>	The blamer is feeling: "I am lonely and unsuccessful."

The blamer is a fault finder, a dictator, a boss. He acts superior, and he seems to be saying, "If it weren't for you, everything would be all right." The voice is hard, tight, and often shrill and loud. Good blaming requires you to be as loud as you can. Cut everything and everyone down. Say things like, "you never do this, or you always do that, or why do you always, or why do you never . . ." And so on. Don't bother about an answer. That is unimportant. The blamer is much more interested in throwing his weight around than really finding out about anything. You call names, criticize everything under the sun. You don't really feel you are worth anything, so if you can get someone to obey you, then you feel you count for something.

**COMPUTER**

Computes, with the resultant message that you are attempting to deal with the threat as though it were harmless; you are trying to establish your self-worth by using big words.

<b>Words are ultra-reasonable</b>	"If one were to observe carefully, one might notice the work worn hands of someone present here."
<b>Body computes</b>	"I am calm, cool, collected,"
<b>On the inside</b>	The computer feels vulnerable.

The computer is very correct, very reasonable, with no semblance of any feeling showing. He is calm, cool, and collected. He could be compared to an actual computer or a dictionary. The body feels dry, often cool, and disassociated. The voice is a dry monotone. When you are acting the part of the computer, use the longest words possible, even if you aren't sure of their meanings. You will at least sound intelligent. After one paragraph no will be listening anyway.

To get yourself really in the mood for this role, image that your spine is a long, heavy steel rod reaching to a ten-inch-wide iron collar around your neck. Keep everything about yourself as motionless as possible, including your mouth. Keep your hands from moving. When you are computing, your voice will naturally sound emotionless because you have no feeling, your mind is bent on being careful not to move, and you are busy choosing the right words. "Say the right words; show no feeling; don't react".

**DISTRACTER**

They distract, so you ignore the threat, behaving as though it wasn't there. Maybe if you do it long enough, it will really go away.

<b>Words are irrelevant</b>	(the words make no sense), angular, and off somewhere else
<b>On the inside</b>	The distracter thinks, "Nobody cares. There is no place for me."

Whatever the distracter does or says is irrelevant to what anyone else is saying or doing. She never makes a response to the point. Her internal feeling is one of dizziness. The voice can be singsong, often out of tune with the words and can go up and down without reason because it is focused nowhere. When you play the distracting role, it will help to think of yourself as a kind of lopsided top, constantly spinning but never knowing where you are going, and not realizing it when you get there. You are too busy moving your mouth, your body, your arms, your legs. Make sure you are never on the point with your words. Ignore everyone's questions; maybe come back with one of your own questions on a different subject. Take a piece of imaginary lint off someone's garment, untie shoelaces, and so on.

To get yourself into the mood for this role: Think of your body as going off in different directions at once. Put your knees together in an exaggerated knock-kneed fashion. This will bring your buttocks out and make it easy for you to hunch your shoulders and have your arms going in opposite directions.

**Review leveling:**

**LEVELING**

***"Just level with me"***

There is a fifth response that Satir calls leveling or flowing. In this response all parts of the message are going in the same direction—the voice says words that match the facial expression, the body position, and the voice tone. Relationships are easier, freer, and more honest; there are few threats to self-esteem. With this response there is no need to blame, retreat into a computer, or be in perpetual motion.

Of the five responses, only the leveling one has any chance to heal ruptures, break impasses, or build bridges between people. So, when you are leveling, you apologize in reality when you realize you've done something you didn't intend. You are apologizing for an act, not for your existence. There are times when you need to criticize or evaluate. When you do this in a leveling way, you are evaluating an act, not blaming the person, and there is usually a new direction you have to offer. The leveling response is real for whatever is. If a leveler says, "I like you," his voice is warm, and he looks at you. If his words are, "I am mad as hell at you," his voice is harsh, and his face is tight. The message is single and straight.

Separate the behavior from the personality.

Continued on next page

**LEVELING (continued)**

Another aspect of the leveling response is that it represents a truth of the person at a moment in time. This is in contrast, for example, to a blaming response where the person is feeling helpless but is acting angry—or is hurting but is acting brave. Leveling is whole, not partial. The body, sense, thoughts, and feelings are all shown. There is an integration, a flowing, an aliveness, an openness, and what I call a juiciness about a person who is leveling.

You trust this person; you know where you stand with him, and you feel good in his presence.

**What are the fears that keep you from leveling?**

We are trying not to feel threatened, to try and throw off rejection we so fear. We tend to threaten ourselves in the following ways:

1. I might make a mistake. (You are sure to make mistakes.)
2. Someone might not like it. (Not everyone likes the same things. Someone will not like what you do.)
3. Someone will criticize me. (Yes, someone will. You are not perfect. Sometimes criticism is useful.)
4. I might impose. (Sure, every time you're in the presence of another person, you might impose, but if you're respectful, they shouldn't be offended.)
5. He will think I am no good. (Maybe so, can you live through it? Maybe it's their issue.)
6. I might be thought of as imperfect. (If you think you need to be perfect, chances are you will find imperfections.)
7. He might leave. (So he leaves. Maybe he should.)

Being a leveler enables you to have integrity, commitment, honesty, intimacy, competence, creativity, and the ability to work with real problems in a real way. Yes, it takes guts, courage, some new beliefs, and some new skills to become a leveling responder. You can't fake it.

**Role Play Activity**

The facilitator provides the following scenarios where a family deals with a problem. Have group participants act out each of the four unhealthy communication patterns through the scenarios. For example, one participant could be assigned the role of a placater father, paired with a distracter teenager. We encourage you to have participants take two or more roles in the role play and examine which role they felt was most familiar and which role they felt was the most unnatural/unlike themselves. Debrief and discuss feelings after several minutes of role playing, then repeat the exercise in different roles. Finally, be sure to have participants role play the scenarios using leveling with direct and healthy communication.

1. Someone didn't empty the trash (their weekly chore/task).
2. Teen stays out all night and returns at 3:00 am smelling like alcohol.
3. A parents spends check on self not thinking of holidays for the kids.
4. After a big fight between the couple, one of them cheats on the other.

**LEVELING EXERCISE**

This is a very good group exercise that participants have said is very helpful. Ask participants to provide an example of a real situation they want to communicate about using the formula below. Go around the circle having each person participate.

WHEN YOU *(Cite the specific behavior incident).*

I FEEL *(one word).*

BECAUSE I THINK *(A sentence).*

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU *(Where you think the other guy is coming from).*

WHAT I WANT IS *(State what you want to happen).*

If appropriate, go on to say:

IF THIS SITUATION DOES NOT CHANGE, I WILL *(State the consequences).*

**Review** additional information about leveling:

**LEVELING AND DEFENSES**

To respond openly to being confronted is to level. We level when we take the risk of being known by spontaneously reporting our feelings. For example, we level when we let someone know we are hurt, afraid, or angry.

Using these feelings as an example of leveling is probably useful for two reasons. Anger, bottled up, or fear that is kept hidden, seems to lead to more relapses than any other feelings. Also, anger and fear (along with affection) are usually the hardest feelings for us to report. Frequently, people make the mistake of assuming that the purpose of group therapy is to make someone angry. Anger is an important feeling. But it is only one feeling among many that we want to discover and level with.

If, instead of leveling, we respond without naming a feeling, we are hiding. The ways we hide our feelings are many, and we call them defenses. Each defense serves to avoid naming the feelings we are now experiencing. This prevents us from being known. One of the most helpful things that the group can do is to help a member identify their defenses.

Defenses that we all use to some extent are:

Rationalizing	Sparring	Verbalizing, talking
Justifying	Questioning, interrogation	Shouting, intimidation
Projecting	Switching	Threatening
Blaming, accusing	Denying	Frowning
Judging, moralizing	Being smug, superior, or arrogant	Glaring
Intellectualizing	Minimizing	Staring
Analyzing	Evading, dodging	Joking
Explaining	Defiance	Grinning, smiling, laughing
Theorizing	Attacking, aggression	Protecting
Generalizing	Withdrawing	Agreeing
Quibbling, equivocating	Silence	Complying
Debating, arguing		

Try leveling with that feeling of fear for a starter and discover how that makes you feel. You'll probably find, as others have, that when you report a feeling, you modify it. Keeping it a secret seems to increase its power. If we don't begin now to risk being genuine and self-revealing, when will we ever really do it?

### **III. Talking Circle (45 minutes)**

The facilitator leads a Talking Circle for participants to share the high and low points of their week and provide support for one another. Participants say "All my relations" when they are done sharing and pass the eagle feather to the next person.

### **IV. Closing (10 minutes)**

The recommended closing reading for this lesson is "Autobiography in Five Short Chapters" by Portia Nelson. Facilitators may instead choose to:

- Select a different poem, meditation, or passage relevant to Lesson 9.
- Ask group participants if they have a closing reading or meditation they would like to share.

Ask participants to reflect on what they learned in the lesson.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

## **Resources**

- Satir, Virginia (1990) [1972]. *Peoplemaking*. Souvenir Press Ltd. ISBN 0-285-64872-1.



## Lesson 10 – Hurt, Pain, and Sadness



### Lesson Purpose

Participants will learn about the importance of processing emotional pain and sadness by engaging in a 5-Step Process: Step one: Recognize you must process pain; it is a natural part of growth; include first of the 4 sacred laws: Change comes from within, in order to change, there must be struggle; Step two: Transcend the pain; Step three: Letter to mother – letter will address three subjects 1. Everything you got from her, 2. what you did not get, 3. where you are at now; Step four: Read your letter to an empty chair while others in the group listen; and Step five: Zip up – have clients tell you two good things they are going to do for themselves this week (self-care). Participants will review material from Lessons 4 and 8.

### Objectives

- Identify the importance of acknowledging any and all emotions experienced when writing and reading aloud the letter to parent.
- Recognize that part of the healing work is the necessity to change our relationship with our past hurts/pain.

### Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Selection from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran<sup>10</sup>
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

### Lesson Guidance

#### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

To begin the session, the facilitator welcomes participants back and leads the following activities:

##### A. Attendance

**The facilitator calls out participant’s names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

<sup>10</sup> *The Prophet* is in the public domain and can be accessed at <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/58585>

## B. Smudging

**Ask participants to smudge** the person sitting to their left and then pass the smudging materials to the next group member. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning.

## C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. A potential reading is the *February 14* (p. 58) daily meditation from *A Cherokee Feast of Days: Daily Meditations, Volume 1* by Joyce Hifler. Facilitators may also select their own reading related to the themes of hurt, pain, and sadness.

## D. Announcements

**Provide announcements and reminders**, as needed, potentially related to assignments from previous lessons or the group schedule (e.g., changes to group meeting times).

## E. Review of Previous Lesson

If desired, the facilitator may **review the key components of the previous week's lesson** and ask participants if there any questions about that lesson.

## F. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

# II. Education Material (115 minutes)

## Welcome participants:

*In preparation for tonight, we will be doing a writing assignment in class so please get a pen, paper, and an empty chair ready for this activity. I will let you know more about that assignment when we get to it. For now, please just have them handy for when we get to the exercise. What we will be learning about is:*

## A. Review Material from Lesson 4 (15 minutes)

### Review material from Lesson 4:

*You may remember Lesson 4 was on "Our Parents/Ourselves," where we learned four common ways people respond with emotions:*

- 1. Denial** – Denial is when we pretend we're not experiencing our feelings—we completely deny our feelings. Those in denial may feel too scared because of what they might do if they let themselves feel.
- 2. Over-Expression** – These are the people that are the opposite of those that are in denial of their feelings. Over-expressors are the people that completely fuse with their feeling. So rather than having anger, they are anger. Their emotions take over their intellect and so they may react physically and verbally. When they allow their emotion to consume them completely, this is what is called "rage or a whiteout." The emotion rage can begin with over-expression. Some of the benefits of over-expression: You get people's attention; people don't have to guess what you are about; it puts people on the defense because that's what they focus on rather than on your inappropriate way of communicating; and finally, it's a way for them to discharge their emotion.

- 3. Suppression** – These are the “stuffers.” They stuff their feelings until they can no longer stuff; then, like a volcano, they explode. So, they choose not to express themselves. This emotion lies midway between denial and over-expression. Stuffers often feel hopeless/helpless. Some of the benefits are: They never say no; people don’t have to know how they feel. What are the consequences associated with stuffing feelings?

Encourage participants to come up with examples. You can use the examples below as prompts:

**Examples:**

- Stores/builds resentments
- Creates feelings of low self-esteem and self-worth
- Bitter
- Somatic illness
- Relapse
- Holds grudges
- You do not express your feelings/needs

*Great. Thank you for sharing. Now let’s look at a healthy way of communication: Expression.*

- 4. Expression** – These are the people who use phrases like: “I think,” “I feel,” “I believe,” “I want,” “I need,” “I don’t need,” “I don’t want,” and “I don’t believe.” They are able to take ownership of their feelings because they know they don’t have any control over others’ feelings and thoughts. They tend to speak slower, are more mindful, and choose their words carefully. They follow the steps of RAS:

- R** – Recognize the feeling;
- A** – Accept/take ownership for it; and
- S** – Share by talking about it or taking action.

*So, remember, Lesson 4 is where we learned we are like our parents or caregivers in that we learned the same behaviors and patterns of communicating that they used. Moving on to week 8, which was “Anger as a Secondary Emotion”, we learned that when we get angry, there is a primary emotion lying underneath that anger – ‘like a blanket’.*

**B. Review Material from Week 8 (5 minutes)**

*Who remembers what the difference is between a secondary and primary emotion?*

Wait for participants’ responses and then explain:

1. Anger is a mask – What is it masking?
2. It’s a signal – to what?
3. What are the typical primary responses that anger is masking?

### C. Reading from Kahlil Gibran "The Profit" (5 minutes)

Read "On Pain," a selection from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran (below). Explain that the reading is about pain and how you relieve yourself of that pain. You may also select a different reading of your choice.

#### ON PAIN

And a woman spoke, saying, Tell us of *Pain*.

And he said:

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.

Even as the stone of the fruit must break, that its heart may stand in the sun, so must you know pain.

And could you keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life, your pain would not seem less wondrous than your joy.

And you would accept the seasons of your heart, even as you have always accepted the seasons that pass over your fields.

And you would watch with serenity through the winters of your grief.

Much of your pain is self-chosen.

It is the bitter potion by which the physician within you heals your sick self.

Therefore, trust the physician, and drink his remedy in silence and tranquility: For his hand, though heavy and hard, is guided by the tender hand of the Unseen, And the cup he brings, though it burn your lips, has been fashioned of the clay which the Potter has moistened with His own sacred tears.

*These are valuable thoughts on the meaning of pain: 'Life is pain and suffering.' 'Pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.' In other words, Gibran is telling us that we have to process our pain. In order for us to heal, we need to process and move that pain; we have to talk about it.*

### D. Five Step Process (70 minutes)

Participants will learn about the importance of processing emotional pain and sadness by engaging in a 5-Step Process:

**Step 1:** Recognize you must process pain; it is a natural part of growth.

*Change comes from within. In order to change, there must be struggle.*

The facilitator discusses what processing means after introducing Step 1.

**Step 2:** Transcend the pain.

*This means we have to go beyond the range of our pain—surpass it. "To rise above or go beyond the limits of," "To triumph over the negative or restrictive aspects of the pain," "To overcome." We have to create a new relationship with pain. If we don't move beyond this pain, what do you think happens?*

The facilitator encourages participants to answer the question. The facilitator is looking for participants to talk about being stuck, which can have consequences. This develops into unresolved grief.

**Step 3:** Letter to Mom group exercise.

Encourage the women to engage in an activity when we get to this step. The activity is to write a letter to your mother or, when applicable, father. The basic steps are:

1. Have each client write a letter to their mother or father. They can write whatever they want, but make sure that each individual signs their own letter.
2. Have participants take turns reading their letters out to the group or to an empty chair while others in the group listen.
3. Discuss each letter and process associated feelings.
4. Begin the discussion of forgiveness and the value of letting go.

If meeting in person, the facilitator will (1) write on the white board the three questions in the writing assignment; and (2) provide pen and paper for everyone to write their assignment. If meeting virtually, the facilitator will share on their screen the three questions in the writing assignment. In preparation for the writing assignment, the facilitator will introduce the "Letter to your mother" exercise and will explain that there are three parts to this letter: (1) What you got from your mom; (2) What didn't get; and (3) Where you are at now. The facilitator needs to be prepared to give a brief "sample" of this writing assignment: "Dear mom, what I learned from you is: all adults are drunks; there is no such thing as personal boundaries; low self-esteem; etc. What I didn't get from you is: . . ."

Facilitators should also read their own samples.

*As you start your writing, I want to emphasize that you need to just start writing; don't think about what you want to say or how you want to say it. Just let your pen flow. We will spend 15 minutes on this 'Letter to mom' exercise. I will give a 5-minute warning.*

**Step 4:** Read letters aloud.

When everyone has written a letter to their mother, the facilitator explains that everyone will read their letter aloud to an empty chair. If in person, the facilitator will have women each take turns facing an empty chair and ask that they read their letter aloud to the empty chair. If virtual, ask women to be sure and have an empty chair next to them or identify an empty chair they can go and sit in front of. The facilitator calls on each participant to read their letter to an empty chair.

*I recognize that this is not an easy assignment to do. Writing the letter can be difficult. Reading it to an empty chair can also be difficult. I have had women tell me that this is an intense experience and that they felt some shifting internally. This is what we call a cathartic experience, meaning that you feel different after. Often times, women can break down during the reading of their letter. This is OK. You are with safe, supportive people that you can trust. Who wants to go first?*

Be prepared to call on women if no one volunteers.

During this activity, the facilitator creates a sense of safety. The facilitator provides affirmations and validation after each participant reads their letter.

*Thank you for having the courage to stick to this writing assignment. We are going to wrap up this part with the last step called 'Zip up'.*

**Step 5:** Zip up

Have women tell you two good things they are going to do for themselves this week (self-care). Go in the same order that women read their letters.

*This part is a short exercise where we are going to practice self-care which is also a part of our healing journey. I would like you each to say what two good things you are going to do for yourself this week.*

Explain catharsis and how participants may experience a shift, a sense of release, throughout the rest of the week.

Emphasize that participants should engage in self-care throughout week as this is a challenging assignment.

### E. Deep Breathing Exercise (10 minutes)

Take participants through a breathing exercise.

*Before we start the Talking Circle, let's practice our deep breathing. I will lead everyone in this.*

Ask women to close their eyes, relax, and take in a deep breath. The facilitator will read off some simple ways to relieve stress: Watch a sunset; pet a dog; take a walk; tell a joke; stretch; see a movie; talk to a friend; say a prayer; give a blessing; play a drum; eat a snack; walk in the rain; take a bubble bath; have a cup of tea; play with a child; read a book; lie in the sun; light a candle.

### III. Talking Circle (45 minutes)

The facilitator leads a Talking Circle for participants to share the high and low points of their week and provide support for one another. Participants say "All my relations" when they are done sharing and pass the eagle feather to the next person.

*We are going to get our Talking Circle started now. As you cover your highs and lows for the week, please also mention how the writing assignment affected you.*

### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

The recommended closing reading for this lesson is the blessing below, a variation on an ancient Tibetan Buddhist Prayer, sometimes called the Buddhist Metta (Lovingkindness) Prayer. Facilitators may instead choose to:

- Select a different poem, meditation, or passage relevant to Lesson 10.
- Ask group participants if they have a closing reading or meditation they would like to share.
- Review your Tribe's traditional Tribal values.

Ask participants to reflect on what they learned in the lesson.

May you be peaceful

May you be happy

May your heart remain open

May you know that beauty of your own true nature

May you be healed

In your healing, may you heal others

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

## Tips/Suggestions

- The facilitator should remember to emphasize the importance of self-care.

## Resources

- Gibran, K. (2020). *The prophet*. Alma Classics.
- Greater Good in Action. (2022). *Loving-Kindness meditation*. The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley. [https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/loving\\_kindness\\_meditation](https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/loving_kindness_meditation)
- Hifler, J. S. (1992). *A Cherokee feast of days: Daily meditations, volume 1*. Council Oak Books.



# Lesson 11 – Forgiveness and Letting Go



## Lesson Purpose

Lesson 11 focuses on the healing power of forgiving and letting go. Participants will come to understand that the meaning of forgiveness is a choice that is threefold: (1) The first is to deny that there was any wrongdoing; (2) The second choice is the decision to seek revenge, which is risky and self-defeating; or (3) The third option is to forgive through a three-step process: (a) Accept; (b) Grieve; and (c) Form a new relationship with your trauma or pain through the act of forgiving.

## Objectives

- Learn about the steps and processes involved in forgiving and letting go.
- Explore strategies for dealing with a perceived offense, mistreatment, or wrongdoing.
- Understand the benefits of forgiving and letting go.
- Participate in a visualization exercise to practice the journey of letting go.

## Materials

- Paper and Pens/Pencils
- Easel, Paper Pad, and Marker
- Attendance Log or Sign-In Sheet
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- Notepads or Large Index Cards and Pens/Pencils
- Large Envelope or Shoebox for Shuffling
- Readings on the Topics of Forgiveness and Letting Go
- Slips of Paper with Questions and Answers for Forgiveness Activity (Optional)
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Handouts

- Forgiveness
- Visualization Exercise

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

#### Welcome participants:

*Welcome back everyone. Tonight, you will need to have a piece of paper, sticky note, or something to write on for a short activity that we will be doing a little later on.*

#### A. Attendance

**The facilitator calls out participant's names to take attendance.** The facilitator marks attendance in the attendance log. If meeting in person, the facilitator can have participants use the sign-in sheet.

#### B. Smudging

**Ask participants to smudge** the person sitting to their left and then pass the smudging materials to the next group member. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. If meeting virtually, the facilitator may ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Provide an opening reading** to prompt thinking about forgiveness and letting go. The facilitator may ask if one of the participants would like to volunteer to read the opening reading. A potential reading is the May 23 (p. 163) daily meditation from *A Cherokee Feast of Days: Daily Meditations, Volume 1* by Joyce Hifler. Facilitators may decide to select a different reading of their choice. If meeting in person, the facilitator will ask participants to refer to their printed handout of the reading. If meeting virtually, the facilitator will share their screen to display the handout.

#### D. Announcements

**Provide announcements and reminders**, as needed, potentially related to assignments from previous lessons or the group schedule (e.g., changes to group meeting times).

#### E. Review of Previous Lesson

If desired, the facilitator may **review the key components of the previous week's lesson** and ask participants if there any questions about that lesson.

#### F. Read Lesson Purpose

**Read the lesson purpose** at the beginning of each lesson.

## II. Education Material (110 minutes)

### Begin the education portion:

*Before we get to the lesson, I'd like to review some of the material from week 9. This is where we learned about double-level messages and leveling.*

### A. Review of Week 9 Material "Double-level Messages & Leveling" (10 minutes)

The facilitator reviews material from Lesson 9 on Virginia Satir's Communication Patterns. The purpose of reviewing this material is to reinforce understanding of communication patterns that are common in dysfunctional families.

#### Review and discuss:

##### *What are double-level messages?*

*Double-level messages are when your voice says one thing but the rest of you (your body language) is saying something else.*

##### *Leveling: Who remembers what leveling is?*

*Leveling, or flowing, is when all parts of the message are going in the same direction: The voice says words that match the facial expression, the body position, and the voice tone. Leveling is whole in that the body, your senses, your thoughts, and feelings are all shown. Everything is flowing, and there's an aliveness, an openness. You trust a leveler; you know where you stand with them; and you feel good in their presence.*

*Now we are going to do a short exercise on forgiveness. Please grab a piece of paper or something to write on and a pen.*

### B. Define "Forgiveness" Warmup Activity (30 minutes)

There are two versions of the activity. Facilitators may choose to complete one or both versions.

#### Activity Version #1

1. Pass out pencils and sheets of paper or index cards to each participant.
2. Ask participants to write their own definition of what "forgiveness" means.  
*What I'd like you to write is your definition of forgiveness. How do you define forgiveness? We'll spend a minute writing our answers.*
3. If meeting in person, collect all handwritten papers from participants and place them in an envelope. Then the envelope is passed around for each woman to pick a piece of paper at random and read what's written. If meeting virtually, have participants read their definition of forgiveness out loud.
4. Provide affirmations while reading and discussing the definitions.

#### Activity Version #2

1. Before the session, the facilitator prints the six questions and answers below, cuts from the sheet to create a slip of paper for each Q & A, and places the six slips of paper in an envelope.
2. During the session, participants are asked to pass the envelope around, pull out a slip, and read it aloud.
3. The facilitator provides affirmations while reading and discussing the Q & As about forgiveness.

## FORGIVENESS

### What Does It Mean to Forgive and Let Go?

Forgiveness and letting go are perhaps among the most difficult steps in the process of recovery. There is something about having problems that makes us feel that we are alive and have a purpose. To forgive and let go—to truly release the held resentment—fills us not only with a sense of freedom but also a sense of dread—a fear of the void. If I don't have a problem or painful issue to work on, what will there be of me—without my problems to identify with and occupy my thoughts and emotions, who am I?

### Why Do We Forgive?

We forgive if we are wise, not for the other person, but for ourselves. We forgive, not to erase a wrong, but to relieve the residue of the wrong that is alive within us. We forgive because it is less painful than holding on to resentment. We forgive because without it we condemn ourselves to repeating endlessly the very trauma or situation that hurt us so. We forgive because ultimately it is the smartest action to take on our own behalf. We forgive because it restores to us a sense of inner balance.

### What Is Letting Go?

Letting go is the act of forgiveness made manifest. Forgiveness too often gets confused with doing good or with certain kinds of superior behavior. This type of forgiveness is bogus and benefits no one. Letting go is an act of surrender, a recognition and acceptance of things as they are, a coming to grips with the fact that we live in a less than perfect world. It is not just a thought but an actual cellular release, a constant daily process, a turning over.

### What Are the Steps on the Way?

There are two very difficult steps or stages on the way to real forgiveness. The first lies in admitting and accepting that there is something to forgive, that life was not what we wished it had been. This requires a working through of the denial and euphoric recall that has sustained us to date. It also implies a willingness to look at and deal with deep issues; to walk the walk and talk the talk. Another even more difficult step lies in the recognition of when to let go of the past and move on. This kind of maturation and growing up is not

something that people from less than functional or adequate pasts find easy to do. Because it is a letting go of the dreams and fantasies that the good parent will come and make things right, it requires true mourning of the lost childhood or parent, an acceptance that what happened happened, and cannot be undone. It is letting go of the dream and giving up the search.

### How Does the Process Work?

This process requires a willingness to know one's own truth and the courage and strength to feel pain that has been hidden in silence. Once one comes to embrace this approach, as much as it can hurt, it feels better than acting out or repressing trauma. After past issues become clear and resolved, it takes discipline to maintain new behaviors and perceptions. This is what recovery is all about, a journey toward the light. Carl Jung said that we do not really resolve problems; instead, we "climb to the top of a mountain; meditate on them until we see them differently." A Course in Miracles calls a miracle a "shift in perception." When we feel the pain but do not connect with the origin of the pain, when something in our present triggers a past hurt or resentment, it feels as if it is entirely about the present, and the past gets projected onto the present. Problems that are loaded with past issues make the present feel unmanageable. Energy patterns that store memories can rise to a conscious level, be looked at for what they are, felt, and released in what Sigmund Freud called, "making the unconscious conscious."

### When Does Forgiveness Happen?

Forgiveness and letting go occur after there is enough personal restoration so that forgiving another no longer compromises the self. In order to rebuild we move through the process of bringing the alienated self back to life and integrating it into the total being. We come to understand that there are other people in the world as well, also with needs and dreams, and that we need to understand and live with them. To forgive and let go are part of coming of age, of taking one's life into one's own hands, of accepting life for what it is and is not, and living it, one day at a time, with choice. A process that occurs over an extended period of time, forgiveness comes when the readiness is there. One day we observe that something that was there is gone and that we are free to move on.

### C. Forgiveness Activity (15 minutes)

In this activity participants make a list of the people they haven't forgiven.

If meeting in person, pass out sheets of paper or index cards and pencils to each participant.

#### Read:

*Please make a list of people you have not forgiven. This list can have names on it, or titles such as former priest, whomever you have not forgiven. You will not share this list with anyone. It is only for you and for this exercise, so you are welcome to do whatever you'd like with it afterward because you won't be turning it in. Then I will ask for a volunteer who will pick one person from their list to talk about what it is that keeps you from forgiving that person. Not everyone has to share, but if someone wants to volunteer, that would be awesome! But first, let's take a minute to make our lists.*

Allow a minute for participants to making a list of people not forgiven.

#### Read:

*The purpose for making a list of people we haven't forgiven is to get us to start thinking about those we haven't forgiven. I will ask for a volunteer or two to share what it is that keeps you from forgiving that person, but it is totally optional to share. I know that this can be a difficult exercise for some of you to do because it gets you out of your comfort zone so it's okay if you'd rather not share at this time. Do I have a brave soul who would like to share who they haven't forgiven and why?*

Have group members pick one person from the list and talk about what keeps them from forgiving (optional to share out loud).

The facilitator thanks participants for sharing and reflects on the benefits of forgiving.

*Moving on, let's now look at three ways people deal with a perceived wrong.*

### D. Three Ways to Deal With a Perceived Wrong (15 minutes)

**Describe** how there are three ways to deal with a perceived wrong:

1. **Deny the wrongdoing:** *This is suppressing it by forgetting it, ignoring it, pretending it didn't happen. However, this is psychologically dangerous because you can set yourself up for the same harm to repeat itself, thus revictimizing yourself. You can create psychosomatic illnesses, illnesses that affect your physical health because you deny the emotional pain.*

*What are the reasons why people might do this? It may be too painful to acknowledge. There could be other reasons to keep a denial system intact. When children are raised in a dysfunctional home, one sibling may say there weren't ANY problems, and another sibling may remember it very differently.*

2. **Revenge:** *This is your second choice, and this may come with risks. A potential consequence of seeking revenge is ending up in jail. "Some say that living well is the best revenge." Often revenge is self-defeating.*
3. **Forgive:** *The last, and probably the more difficult, choice is to forgive. Forgiveness is a 3-step process:*
  - *Accept you are affected by the wrongdoing (this feels like shock, can feel numb, vulnerable).*
  - *Grieve by journaling, counseling (self-examination), traditional healing (including spiritual ceremony, vision quest, sweat lodge, and other ceremonies); you may expect to go through shock, anger, rage, acceptance, and eventually forgiveness.*
  - *Form a new relationship with the source of the loss by changing your mental attitude.*

The facilitator leads a group discussion on the consequences of not forgiving. Emphasize to the group the power and importance of forgiveness and the role forgiveness plays in the healing process.

## E. Riddle Discussion (15 minutes)

**Riddle #1:** *Who benefits most from the act of forgiveness, the person being forgiven or the person who is doing the forgiving?*

Allow group members time to share.

**Answer:** *That's correct. The person who benefits the most is the person doing the forgiving. Why is this? Because this is the first step in the healing process. It is also the hardest thing to do—forgive someone. It can take a long time to forgive, often years. Accept that it comes in small increments. You heal yourself first and the other person second. It is like letting go of poisons and toxins that affect your physical body and emotional body. Forgiving is letting go of that heavy baggage and unfinished business. The consequences of not forgiving can have damaging effects on you. How many of you have ever forgiven someone? Was it a little thing, a big thing? When you made your lists of people you haven't forgiven, did you find that difficult to make? Don Coyhis talked about the unforgiveable. What do you think this might be? What are the benefits of forgiving?*

*Forgiving is the hard part—accept that it comes in small increments, often over years. Like grieving, forgiving follows the same rhythm—it comes slowly and gradually and in small increments.*

### Discuss:

- What are the consequences you have for not forgiving?
- What are the consequences of not dealing with this issue?
- Moreover, in what areas of your life is this affecting you?
- What is closure? How do we achieve it?
- How do we move forward?
- How do we redefine a new relationship?

**Riddle #2:** *If you forgive, do you have to forget, as in the phrase "forgive and forget"?*

Allow group members time to share.

**Answer:** *When you forget, you set others up for the same hurt or abuse to happen to them. To forget is foolish, never forget.*

## F. Visualization Exercise (25 minutes)

**Guide participants in a visualization exercise** to practice the journey of letting go. Facilitators may select their own activity or use the activity here.

### Introduce the activity:

*This exercise is intended to help you relax and envision letting go of anger, resentment, or those that you have difficulty forgiving. I'd like you to practice your breathing while I take you through a visualization exercise. The way I deep breathe is: In for a count of 4; hold for 2; and blow out slowly for a count of 4. So please focus on your breathing while I walk us through the visualization exercise.*

Guide participants through the following steps:

**VISUALIZATION EXERCISE**

**Close your eyes**

**Imagine you are lying on a calm, beautiful beach:**

- Relax your toes—if there is any tension, tightness, or discomfort, release it.
- Imagine feeling the warm water from the waves covering your toes and then receding.
- Guide participants through relaxing their abdomen, shoulders, elbows, fingers, shoulders, and head.

**Imagine that you:**

- Stand up and follow a path that leads to a forest.
- Go through the forest.
- See a meadow.
- In the meadow there is a rock, and on the rock is a spiritual teacher or guide.
- Giving you a gift—note the gift.
- Is there any wisdom you would like to receive?
- The guide is disappearing.
- White light from the sky is coming into your heart.
- Feel it going through your body—note how it feels.
- Allow the light to slowly leave the body and be released back up to the sky.
- You can come back to this light at any time.

- Follow the path back to the beach—there is a dock.
- By the dock is a boat—think of every person you haven't forgiven (this can include your parents and yourself)—put them in the boat.
- Slowly undo the knot tying the boat.
- Slowly let the boat go out to sea.
- Tell the people
  - I love you.
  - I forgive you.
  - I bless you.
  - I don't have to see you if I don't want to.
  - I don't have to hear you if I choose not to.
  - I can choose today who I want to be around.
- Faces of the people fade.
- Now they are shadows and silhouettes.
- The boat is gone—you've let them go or said what you wanted to.
- You walk back to the beach and lie down.
- Wiggle your nose.
- Wiggle your toes.

**Come back to this room.**

**Open your eyes.**

Group facilitators have observed that having the Talking Circle late in the session, as opposed to at the beginning, allows for enough time to complete the educational portion.

**III. Talking Circle (50 minutes)**

The facilitator leads a Talking Circle for participants to share the high and low points of their week and provide support for one another. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

## IV. Closing (10 minutes)

Facilitators may close this lesson by reviewing their Tribe's traditional values. You may provide a handout listing the values. If meeting virtually, the values handout may be displayed on screen.

At the end of each lesson, **the facilitator asks participants to write comments** describing something they learned, felt, or took away from the lesson. If meeting in person, comments are written on **sticky notes and placed in a shoe box**. If meeting virtually, participants enter comments in the meeting platform's chat feature. Participants may also be allowed to share comments verbally.

## Tips/Suggestions

- As facilitator, your goal for this lesson is for group members to understand the power and importance of forgiveness and the role forgiveness plays in the healing process.

## Resources

- Dayton, T. (1992). *Daily affirmations for forgiving and moving on (Powerful inspiration for personal change)*. Health Communications, Inc.
- Goodreads. (2022). *Forgiveness and letting go quotes*. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/forgiveness-and-letting-go>
- Hereford, Z. (n.d.). *Forgiveness and letting go - How to achieve it*. Essential Life Skills.net. <https://www.essentiallifekills.net/forgiveness-and-letting-go.html>
- Hifler, J. S. (1992). *A Cherokee feast of days: Daily meditations, volume 1*. Council Oak Books.
- Mayo Clinic Staff. (2020, November 13). *Forgiveness: Letting go of grudges and bitterness*. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/forgiveness/art-20047692>
- Weir, K. (2017, January). Forgiveness can improve mental and physical health. *Monitor on Psychology*, 48(1). <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/01/ce-corner>



# Lesson 12 – Graduation



## Summary

Lesson 12 is a graduation ceremony to celebrate participants’ completion of Phase I of the program. The goal is to create a celebratory mood and atmosphere to acknowledge the participants who have demonstrated the commitment to complete the phase. The ceremony is an opportunity to recognize and honor all graduates as well as their guests—mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers—for supporting participants on their courageous journey in the completion of Phase I. Participants are encouraged to invite up to two guests to the graduation ceremony.

Graduates participate in an opening Ribbon Ceremony (or other traditional Tribal ceremony marking completion, growth, and celebration) to begin the evening. Following the Ribbon Ceremony, certificates of completion are awarded while attendees enjoy dinner together. The facilitator is encouraged to say a few words to friends and family about each graduating participant focusing on what is unique about them or sharing a little story they have learned about each participant. If the facilitator plans to hold information gathering interviews to collect feedback on Phase I, the interview questions may be distributed at the event. The facilitator closes the ceremony by encouraging participants to continue to Phase II of the group.

## Materials

- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather
- For Ribbon Ceremony – several strands of ribbon, each about 12 inches long. Colors of the ribbons may be chosen to reflect the colors of the Medicine Wheel: red, yellow, black, and white.
- Phase I Certificate of Completion for each participant.
- Stipend for Completion (Depending on the availability of resources for your program, participants may be gifted a stipend for completing Phase I.)
- Graduation Gifts (E.g., Smudging Kit)
- Meeting Space

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Graduation Ceremony

The facilitator hosts a graduation ceremony to celebrate the completion of Phase I. When planning the event, facilitators are free to follow their own judgment and intuition on how to incorporate the practices, ceremonies, culture, and traditions of their own Tribe and community. The information provided here is intended as a sample to inform planning.

By this time, the participants have shared personal information about their lives and likely had deep and moving experiences with this group. A special relationship has been built between the facilitator and each participant. This trust and rapport is a critical part of the program. At the time of graduation, it’s important for the facilitator to acknowledge their special relationship

with each participant. During the graduation event, facilitators can demonstrate this by saying something that is unique about each participant or recalling a shared memory or experience.

Participating in this curriculum is part of a journey. The completion of Phase I should be celebrated and recognized as an accomplishment for participants. Participants should be encouraged to continue to Phase II.

### A. Planning the Event

To plan the event, the facilitator:

1. Schedules a date and time for the event.
2. Reserves meeting space, such as a hall or small auditorium. The space would benefit from having a stage or space for a lectern and space for tables where participants can eat a meal.
3. Arranges to have a meal served at the event.
4. Informs participants of the date, time, and location of the event.
5. Arranges to have a drummer and Tribal spiritual leaders attend the event.
6. Assigns an individual to lead the Ribbon Ceremony portion of the event.
7. Prepares Certificates of Completion for each participant.
8. Informs participants that they may invite two guests to accompany them at the event.
9. Sets up meeting space with tables for participants and their guests to sit and eat.

The most recent graduation took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The facilitator was able to identify an outdoor covered area to maintain safe distancing, and masks were required at all times. Although the pandemic was still going on, the facilitator felt that, after many weeks of virtual learning, it was important and worthwhile to bring the participants together to celebrate their accomplishment.

### B. Welcoming

Welcome participants and guests to the graduation ceremony. Set a mood of optimism, appreciation, and celebration.

### C. Smudging

The facilitator or another individual smudges members of the group and guests with sage and eagle feather. A group member will smudge the drummer and the individual directing the Ribbon Ceremony. An alternative option is to conduct a group smudging of all attendees. The facilitator and/or guests may drum and sing at this time.

### D. Ribbon Ceremony or Other Cultural/Tribal Ceremony

Participants join in a Ribbon Ceremony. Participants in the Ribbon Ceremony are asked to stand in a circle. Each participant is given two strands of ribbon.

The facilitator or designated ceremony leader informs attendees that the ribbon colors—Red, Black, White, and Yellow—represent the Four Directions of the Medicine Wheel.

The facilitator reads the following:

*We invite our ancestors or those that have gone on before us into the circle and ask for their protection and guidance.*

*We want those who were significant in our lives, whether living or departed, to share this experience with us.*

*We wish to create a bond with them and with each other, so that we can work together.*

*We wish to create an atmosphere of sharing, safety, and trust in the circle as we continue to do this work.*

The facilitator leads the ceremony:

*I would like each of you to think of two persons who were influential in your life and who you would also like to be with you during this journey. So, I will start by calling my mother. I will explain how she was there for me, how we expressed caring, how I learned from her, and how her gifts of wisdom made a difference in my life.*

*I will then call another person into the circle and ask them to share two persons who were influential in their life. Then we'll tie our two ribbons together and the next person in the circle will share their two individuals, tie their two ribbons together, and tie their end with the person next to them. This goes around the entire circle.*

*The tying of the ribbon signifies the bond among us in the group and our bond with the spirits or those ancestors or loved ones who are joining us in this circle.*

## E. Dinner and Awards Ceremony

The meal is served, and participants and guests eat and mingle to celebrate the day. Participants are gifted a smudge kit and stipend for completion of Phase I. The goal is for participants to feel a sense of pride and achievement for the completion of Phase I. The facilitator invites participants to continue to Phase II, shares the start date, and explains how to sign up.

## Tips/Suggestions

- Participants who have had traumatic experiences and many challenges in their lives may not have had many opportunities to experience the praise, support, and positive reinforcement from family and community members for completing a program that requires commitment and perseverance. That is why this ceremony represents an important part of the program.
- Recognize the gifts that participants have shared with each other in the form of listening, reflecting, and demonstrating empathy.
- Planning an event can require a lot of time and effort. It is recommended that facilitators seek help from fellow staff members in their organization to help with preparations. The facilitator may wish to form a planning team to help prepare for the event.
- If circumstances require hosting the event online, do what is possible to maintain the celebratory mood of the event. This can include having online games, trivia hunts, and activities. Each participant can be offered time to speak, perhaps to share the meaning behind a personal item of special importance to them.
- Encourage participants to invite guests to the graduation ceremony. The presence of participants' family members will add to the warmth and spirituality of the event. The more the merrier!
- Following the event, the facilitator may wish to schedule and hold information gathering interviews to collect feedback from participants on their journey through Phase I. In this case, interview questions may be distributed at the event.



## Appendix: Sample Materials and Handouts



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## ATTENDANCE FORM

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Lesson (Week):</b>
<b>Start Time:</b>	<b>End Time:</b>
<b>Facilitator(s):</b>	<b>Location:</b>
Please write first and last names of participants who attended this lesson.	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	



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## GROUP PROGRESS NOTE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Time in/out: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interventions applied** (please check applicable boxes):

- Direct Instruction
- Expressive Art
- Role-play
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Participation:** (select level of participation)

Minimal	Satisfactory		Outstanding	
1	2	3	4	5

**S**—Subjective summary statement by the client (usually a direct quote, statement captures theme of the session, client’s response to group)

---



---

**O**—Objective data or information matching the subjective statement (descriptions may include body language and affect)

---



---

**A**—Assessment of the situation, the session, and the client (any progress towards treatment goals in group)

---



---

**P**—Plan for future clinical work (reflects interventions specified in treatment plan, follow-up required or completed)

---



---

Clinician & Credentials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 1

### THE CIRCLE

*By Amalia Monreal*

The circle that you (we) create is sacred. The only way that a circle can be destroyed is from the inside out, from within itself. If any one of you break the circle by breaking the confidentiality of the others, you will be brought back to the circle and be held accountable not only to Amalia but to the rest of the women here.

You will be asked to explain yourself. This will do great harm to the circle; it will affect the trust that we are trying to build. If you cannot trust the circle (each other) you will not be able to do your work, which is the reason you are all here, to do your own personal work. If you know others in the group and you have a past—then you will need to put that aside. Otherwise, you will not be focusing on your work.

At a group level, you will have a hard time growing if you become distracted or hold grudges against one another. You can talk down to one another or you can build one another up.

Remember that change takes time, and you may be trying to change patterns that you have become accustomed to your whole life.

Therefore, I invite you to walk slowly with me as we make this journey together.

Gunalchéesh, Howa

(Organization Name)

# GROUP INTAKE FORM

Name	Social Security Number		
Address	City	State	Zip
Cell Phone Number	Work/Message Phone Number		
Tribal Affiliation	Enrollment Number		

**Applicant and Persons in Home Participating in Group:**

Name	Date of Birth	Relationship to Applicant	Tribal Affiliation	Enrollment Number

**What services do you receive?**

- |                                               |                                               |                                                    |                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly Services     | <input type="checkbox"/> Motherhood is Sacred | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive Indian Parenting | <input type="checkbox"/> Grief Support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intertribal Drumming | <input type="checkbox"/> Craft Night          | <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Step Medicine Wheel    | <input type="checkbox"/> Women's Group |

Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you currently receiving services from another agency/department?**     Yes     No

If Yes, which one(s)?

**How were you referred to Tribal Family & Youth Services?**

Applicant's Signature	Date
-----------------------	------



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## GROUP THERAPY SCREENING

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Diagnosis: \_\_\_\_\_

Time in/out: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Problems Addressed: Pre-screen for \_\_\_\_\_ group.

Pertinent History/Content: Participant was referred for \_\_\_\_\_  
by \_\_\_\_\_

Active Treatment/Service Provided: *(participant was provided with information about group goals and objectives, group rules, group members, and responsibilities):*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group Topic Relationship to Participant Treatment Plan:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Plan *(decision on participant being good fit for the group or denied, change to treatment plan):*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Participant good fit for group:  Yes  No  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clinician & Credentials Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Date



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## CONSENT FOR GROUP THERAPY

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (if under 18): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Group Meeting Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Goal(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**As a participant of group therapy, I have rights and responsibilities. (Please initial next to each of the following.)**

	I understand that group therapy does not replace individual counseling.
	I understand that Tlingit & Haida providers are mandated reporters (by law they are responsible for reporting any suspected abuse to children, vulnerable adults, and elderly) as well as threats of harm to self and others.
	I recognize the requirements and agree to maintain confidentiality for all group members including keeping their names private outside of group.
	I agree to maintain all group conversations as confidential, private, and not to be repeated outside of group.
	I understand that my client record for group is to be kept separate from other group members' records.
	I agree to be on time, respectful to others, and responsible for informing the provider if I cannot make an appointment.
	I understand that if I break any of the above agreements I may be asked to leave the group.

**Consent for Group Therapy**—I understand my responsibilities to participate in group therapy and confirm that I have read the agreements above. Anything I do not understand, I am aware I can discuss with the group facilitator.

Participant Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Printed Name (if under 18 years of age): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Clinician & Credentials**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Supervisor**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



## INFORMATION GATHERING QUESTIONNAIRE

### Phase I Information Gathering

Yéil Koowú Shaawát

---

1. What brought you here today?

a. How would you describe your level of readiness to participate in this group?

*Definition of "readiness": Your state of being or condition that tells you if you are ready to participate in this group. (For example, Are you excited? Nervous? Curious? How do you feel spiritually?)*

b. What do you expect to get out of this experience?

c. What special gifts (e.g., personal qualities, cultural strengths, teachings, wisdom, talents, etc.) do you feel you bring to this group?

d. Do you know others that have participated in this group in the past? What have they had to say about it?



e. Have you participated in this group before? If so, what brought you back?

---

2. What is your current social (e.g., friends, co-workers, etc.) or family support system (e.g., your family supports you when you need help or family supports available through an agency)?

---

3. What is your relationship with your spirituality?

---

4. Can you describe your relationship with the environment (land)?

---

5. How would you describe success in your life?



---

6. How would you describe success in your family?

---

7. Is your relationship with your children the way you want it to be right now? Please describe or explain.

---

8. How will you know this program is working for you?

---

9. What are your goals for this program?

*Definition of "goal": What you hope or attempt to achieve.*

---

10. What goals do you have for your life?



---

**11. What does wellness mean to you?**

*Definition of "wellness": Having a balance in your life that helps you achieve and maintain good health. Having a happy and fulfilling life as defined by you.*

---

**12. Where are you in regard to engaging with your culture or Native community?**

**a.** Do you teach/pass down cultural teachings to your children? How so?

**b.** Are culture and wellness connected? How so?

---

**13. Are you a member of a Tribe?**

Yes

No

*If yes, which Tribe(s)?*



---

14. Whether you are a member of a Tribe or not, do you participate in Tribal cultural activities (including but not limited to: koo.éex, basket weaving, dipping, sweats, spirituality, customs, traditions, other, etc.)?

Yes

No

---

15. If yes, please circle any activity above that you do participate in. If there are other cultural activities you participate in that are not listed above, please write them below:

## GROUP GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

### Phase I: Anger, Stress, and Communication

Yéil Koowú Shaawát

#### What Group Members Can Expect:

Like most healing groups, this one will go through a series of changes. Don't get discouraged and quit because *at first* it may seem like this is not what you want; the group will change over time, and the way it changes will depend on its members. Some of the developmental changes you can expect are:

- *At first*, people are reluctant to personally disclose. This isn't surprising since you are all strangers; the ability to disclose depends on how soon you learn to trust each other.
- *At first*, talking about feelings from the past will feel difficult, maybe impossible. It hurts to talk about feelings you have stuffed so long—but with time, practice, and acceptance, it gets easier.
- *At first*, expressing negative feelings in front of others—or watching them express their negative feelings—can feel too personal or not appropriate. Again, with time, practice, and acceptance, it gets easier.
- *At first*, you may have trouble accepting responsibility for “your group”. It takes time to learn to trust others; don't worry, it will happen.
- *With time*, you will come to feel safe enough to disclose your past experiences and feelings and how you are right now.
- The length of time it takes to heal will be different for each person. But remember, the distortions of a lifetime cannot be remedied within a few weeks. It takes time to heal and there are no shortcuts. Only time can heal yourself—as a counselor, all I can do is help.

#### Group Expectations/Rules

- Respect each other.
- No racist remarks or derogatory statements.
- Allow speakers to finish before you begin speaking.
- Protect confidentiality—you can talk about the topic outside of group, but no specifics.
- Use “I” statements.
- Arrive within ten minutes of group starting time.
- Call if you won't make it—if not, we will worry about you.
- Attend 10 out of 12 sessions to receive a certificate.
- Gathering/harvesting, dipping, and sweats are not mandatory.
- Respect the rules of the Talking Circle.

## SYLLABUS

Yéil Koowú Shaawát

## Phase I: Anger, Stress, and Communication

- Lesson: 1 **Orientation/Introductions**, The Cultural & Spiritual components of healing; introduction to the Medicine Wheel & Four Directions; relationships in sets of four; Sweat Lodge ceremony; review 12-week syllabus
- Lesson: 2 **Cycle of Violence/Stages of Anger**, Educate yourself on the cycle of violence; Identify your role in the cycle, learn how you keep the cycle going, examine the bud, blast & the honeymoon, Anger Scale 0-10 & 0-3 rule
- Lesson: 3 **Physiology of Anger**, Brain anatomy; role of the hypothalamus, fight/flight/freeze. How stress affects the body, stress & disease, 20 proven stress reducers; mind, body, spirit connection
- Lesson: 4 **Our Parents/Ourselves**, Anger as a learned behavior, four common ways that people deal with their emotions, healthy ways of expressing our emotions, the myth of negative emotions. Purification Ceremony, smudging/purposes, Four Sacred Laws, Talking Circle, complete trauma genogram.
- Lesson: 5 **Film Related to Anger**; Watch a film to help understand how anger works and how to deal with it; may include *Dominick and Eugene*, *The Burning Bed*, *Swimming Up Stream*, *Woman Thou Art Loosed*, *What's Love Got to Do With It*, *Pow Wow Highway*, *La Bamba*
- Lesson: 6 **Being with Anger/Anger Styles/Triggers**, Elements of passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, and as-ertive styles of communication include verbal/nonverbal, mottos/beliefs, characteristics, confrontation & problem solving, role play communication styles
- Lesson: 7 **Societal Anger ~ Historical Perspectives**, understanding where our patterns and behaviors in dealing with anger originate. Learn historical genocide and oppression of AI/AN and the impact these experiences have on anger/behaviors. What is historical trauma, what are the results of historical trauma, film; *Multi-generational grief*, *Angoon Bombing*, *The Land is Ours*, *Our Spirits Don't Speak English: Indian Boarding School*
- Lesson: 8 **Anger as a Secondary Emotion**; anger is more often the feeling that lies underneath a primary emotion; identify primary emotions anger is masking; provide envelope of numerous emotions have client's pick and describe, using formula of RAS- recognize the feeling, accept or take ownership for it, and share or take-action
- Lesson: 9 **Communication Skills and Constructive Ways to Work with Anger**, Differentiate between healthy and unhealthy communication patterns, examine Virginia Satir's work on communication patterns in dysfunctional families, role play familial characters. Understand the concept of leveling and practice leveling communication
- Lesson: 10 **Hurt, Pain and Sadness**, review—what are the consequences associated with stuffing feelings, review anger as a secondary emotion; what are some feelings commonly turned into anger. Reading from *"The Prophet,"* include work from Carl Jung; metaphors in understanding trauma/healing. Gestalt/insight therapy; letter to mother, empty chair exercise. The Tree and the Medicine Wheel

Lesson: 11 **Forgiveness and Letting Go**, what it means to forgive and let go, what are our choices, making the unconscious conscious, visualization; Lying on the beach

Lesson: 12 **Awards and Potluck** – Completion of Phase I

**I am learning that there are some things about myself that I can change and other things that I cannot change. I am working on changing the things that I can.**



## Lesson 2

### CYCLE/STAGES OF ANGER

Typical stages of a couple's argument include:

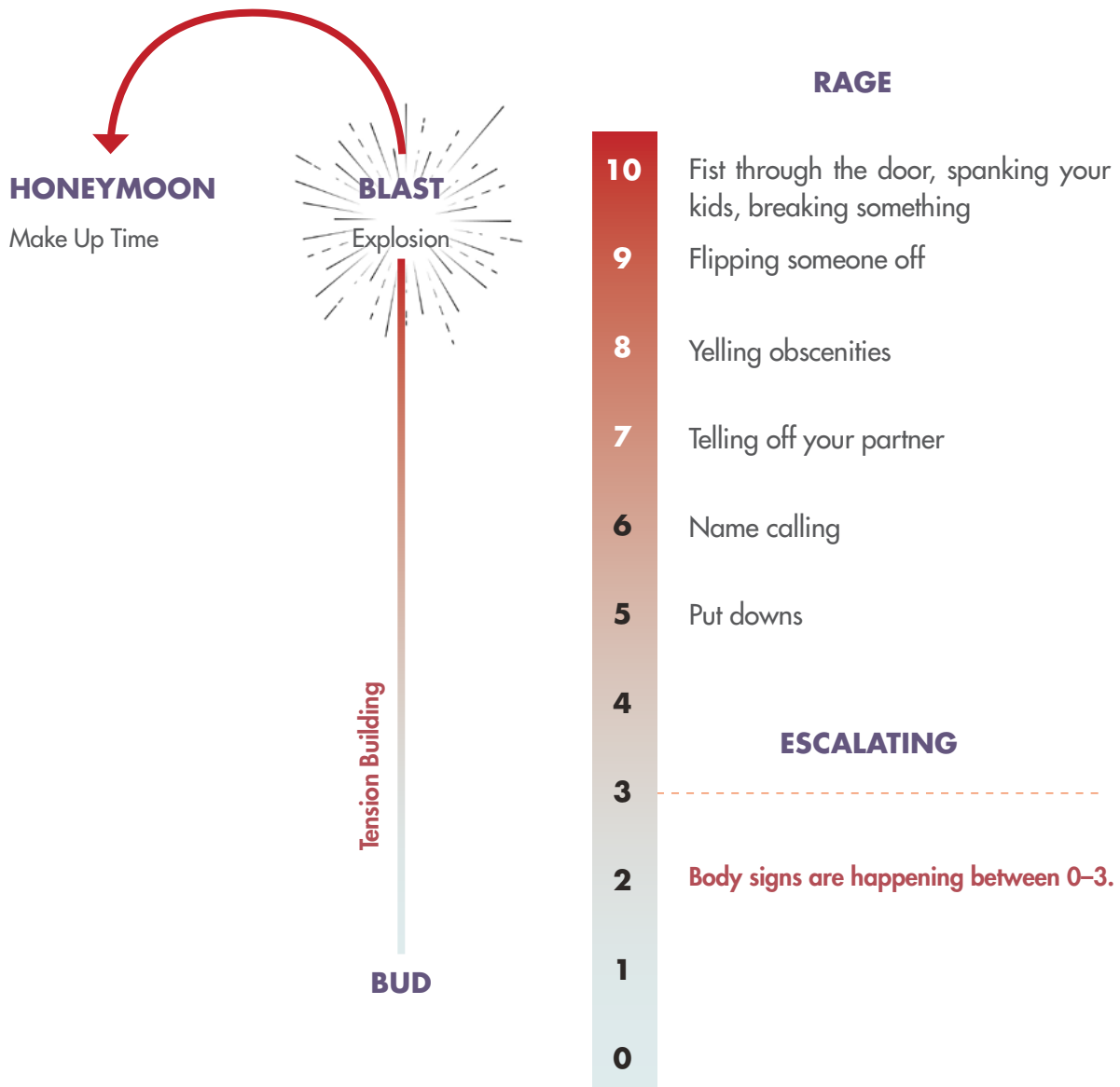
1. A precipitating event
2. An angry outburst
3. Screaming or crying
4. A crescendo (perhaps including domestic violence)
5. Exhaustion
6. Withdrawal or apology.

Think about the toll anger takes on your relationships—what it cost you in terms of support and satisfaction.

Once you permit verbal or physical aggression to enter your relationship, you develop a tendency to return again and again to this type of response—this can be called the "Dance of Anger."

Chronic anger does not make you strong. It makes you weak. It encourages attack. The truth is anger begets anger. The more you shout, the more you invite shouting. The more you rage, the more you invite rage.

## THE ANGER SCALE



The time we have to channel our anger is between 0-3. This is the time a person can do something; this is where we can change our behavior and transform that energy.

## CONTINUUM OF RELATIONSHIP ABUSE

Relationship violence usually happens as part of a continuum from mild abuse to serious violence. It often begins with mild forms of abuse, such as name-calling or slapping. If nothing happens to stop the violence, it will gradually grow worse. Without some kind of help, the end result can be death.

### PHYSICAL

pushing    punching    slapping    kicking    throwing objects    choking    using weapons    homicide/suicide    **Death**

### VERBAL /EMOTIONAL

name calling    criticizing    "you're no good"    ignoring    yelling    "you're fat"    isolation    humiliation    **Suicide**

### SEXUAL

unwanted touching    sexual name calling    unfaithfulness    false accusations    forced sex    hurtful sex    **Rape**



## HOW ABUSE IMPACTS THE BATTERER, THE BATTERED MATE, AND CHILDREN

BATTERER Batterer Is Characterized By	BATTERED MATE Battered Mate Is Characterized By	CHILDREN Children Are Characterized By
. . . fearfulness that partner and/or children will abandon; fear of being alone.	. . . constant fear and terror which gradually becomes cumulative and oppressive with time.	. . . constant fear and terror for their life as well as parents and siblings; confusion and insecurity (appetite/sleep disturbances).
. . . containment/confinement of mate and use of espionage tactics against her (i.e., checks mileage/times errands).	. . . helplessly "allowing" containment or confinement/restriction by mate; usually misinterpreted as caring behavior.	. . . increasing deceptiveness; lying, excuses for outings, stealing, cheating, feeling trapped by parental dynamics.
. . . use of invasive tactics; violates others' personal boundaries; rejects responsibility for failure (marital, familial, or occupational) or for violent acts.	. . . gradually losing sight of personal boundaries for self and children; unable to assess danger accurately; accepts all blame.	. . . poor definition of personal boundaries, violation of others' personal boundaries; accepts/projects blame.
. . . belief that coercive behavior is aimed at securing the family nucleus ("for the good of the family").	. . . belief that transient acceptance of violent behavior will ultimately lead to long term resolution of family problems.	. . . little or no understanding of the dynamics of violence; often assumes violence to be the norm.
. . . absence of guilt/remorse on an emotional level even after intellectual recognition.	. . . emotional acceptance of guilt for mate's behavior; thinks mate "can't help it," considers own behavior as provocative.	. . . self-blame (depending on age) for family feuding, separation, divorce, and internal conflicts.
. . . generational history of abuse.	. . . generational history of witnessing abuse in family and/or being abused.	. . . continuation of abuse pattern in adult life.
. . . frequent participation in pecking order battering.	. . . participation in pecking order battering.	. . . frequent participation in pecking order pattern (maims or kills animals, abuses siblings); often times abuses parents in later years.
. . . assaultive skills which improve with age and experience (increase in danger potential and lethality risks to family members over time).	. . . "creative" behavior which either diverts or precipitates mate's violence; but level of carelessness increases (judgement of lethality potential deteriorates) over time.	. . . poor problem-solving skills: may use violence as problem-solving technique in school, with peers, with family (appears as early as preschool); demonstrates aggression or passivity.
. . . demanding and often assaultive role in sexual activities; sometimes punishes with abstinence, at times experiences impotence.	. . . poor sexual self-image. Assumes that role is total acceptance of partner's sexual behavior. Attempts at abstinence result in further abuse.	. . . poor sexual image, uncertainty about appropriate behavior, confused model identification, immaturity in peer relationships.
. . . increasingly assaultive behavior when mate is pregnant; pregnancy often marks the first assault.	. . . high risk for assaults/abuse during pregnancy.	. . . higher risk for assaults during mother's pregnancy.

<b>BATTERER</b> Batterer Is Characterized By	<b>BATTERED MATE</b> Battered Mate Is Characterized By	<b>CHILDREN</b> Children Are Characterized By
. . . controlling by threatening homicide and/or suicide . . . often attempts one or both when partners separate (known to complete either or both).	. . . frequent contemplation of suicide, history of minor attempts, occasionally completes suicide or becomes a homicide victim; frequently wishes partner dead. Occasionally, completes homicide in self-defense.	. . . heightened suicide risks and attempts, increased thoughts of suicide and/or murdering parents; prone to negligence and carelessness.

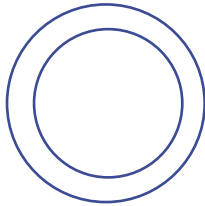
## FIGHTING FAIR

1. Identify the problem.
2. Talk only about the problem.
3. Solve the problem—don't blame or attack.
4. Respect the other person's feelings.
5. Listen with an open mind.
6. Take responsibility for your actions—your part of the agreement.

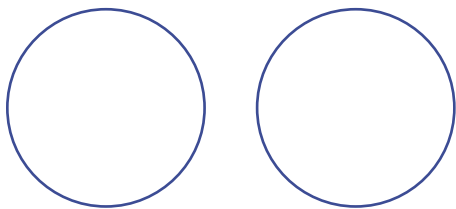
### NOT FAIR!

- Physical violence
- Threats
- Blaming
- Name calling
- Put downs
- Bringing up the past

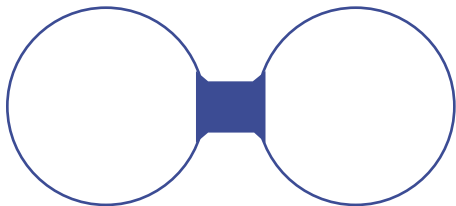
## CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS



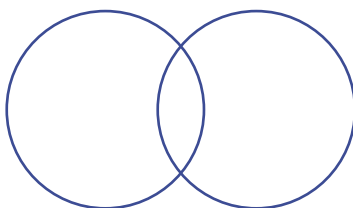
**Codependent relationships** are characterized by a lack of boundaries. Usually, one person is more controlling of the other and can dictate where they go, who they see, and how long they are allowed to be away from them. This is a relationship that is enmeshed; you often can't tell them apart (e.g., you ask one of them a question and the other answers, or one is talking and the other interrupts and finishes the sentence/story). Often, one person feels trapped in this type of relationship. One or both may feel there is no sense of self.



An **independent relationship** is illustrated as distant, disconnected. The individuals in the relationship are separate (e.g., they may be living in the same house but are detached from each other or unso-cialable). They no longer have anything in common and are leading separate lives. They've grown apart. This is referred to as an independent relationship.



A couple in a codependent or independent relationship might seek couples counseling. However, this may not be effective because one or the other might not feel safe enough to be truthful. Instead, a counselor could seek to pull the codependent relationship apart and provide individual counseling, helping each one to gain a sense of independent identity. Once a sense of individuality is established, the counselor works to **build a bridge**.



This third relationship is referred to as an **interdependent relationship**. The individuals have a sense of their own identity. They are aware of their own likes and dislikes. In this diagram, the larger part of each circle makes up two-thirds and represents each person's individual identity, while the overlap in the middle of the circles represents their commitment to the relationship and makes up a third. They are not giving up their identity but share a part of themselves. The two hallmarks of a healthy relationship are: 1) Identity, and 2) Equality. In an interdependent relationship, both partners each give equally to the relationship.

### Lesson 3

## TOOLS IN UNDERSTANDING ANGER

### The Physiological Response or 0–3 Concept When Anger Escalation Is Occurring

1. Use Energy-Channeling Methods
  - For example: vacuuming, raking, running, swimming, walking, cleaning house vigorously
  - This can be helpful when we have not yet developed fully adequate skills for effectively verbalizing feelings.
2. Use Distracting Techniques if your anger is escalating towards destructive behavior:
  - Restructuring of the action is necessary
  - Back away from the situation
3. Using Calming Techniques:
  - Positive self-talk
  - Going for a walk
  - Visualizations of being in a peaceful place
  - Gardening
  - Painting

### Use of these can assist you in reducing the 0–3 response time when you are physiologically escalating by

- Reducing blood pressure
- Slowing the mind
- Reducing muscle tension

You learn that instead of displacing your anger, you have a choice to deal directly with its source. When you realize this, you have control over how you choose to respond to triggers, to listen and use your intellect and judgment. You can decide whether an issue is important enough to respond to: your choice, what will you do?





## STRESS SYMPTOMS: PHYSICAL EFFECTS

- Blood pressure up
- Increased heart rate
- Difficulty in breathing
- Sweaty palms
- Tightness in chest
- Urinary frequency
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Clenched jaws
- Blurred vision
- Low disease tolerance
- Flushed face
- Poor circulation
- Tics, trembling, or twitching
- Diarrhea
- Muscles tightening
- Hearing increases
- Headaches
- Cold sweats



## **Lesson 4**

# **HOW I LEARNED TO DEAL WITH MY EMOTIONS**

**How did/does my mother deal with her anger?**

(Please circle the way that best describes your mother and write one or two sentences to explain)

**Denial**

**Suppression**

**Over-Expression**

---

---

---

---

**How did/does my father deal with his anger?**

(Please circle the way that describes your father and write one or two sentences to explain).

**Denial**

**Suppression**

**Over-Expression**

---

---

---

---

**How have current or past romantic partners dealt with their anger?**

(Please circle the response that describes your romantic partner and write one or two sentences to explain.)

**Denial**

**Suppression**

**Over-Expression**

---

---

---

---

**How do I deal with my anger?**

(Please circle the response that seems to fit you and write one or two sentences to explain.)

**Denial**

**Suppression**

**Over-Expression**

---

---

---

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# TRAUMA GRAM WORKSHEET: ASSESSING FAMILY HISTORY OF TRAUMA

The Trauma Gram can help you better understand your family's trauma and resilience across generations. The tool can help you make sense of how trauma events have impacted your family's individual and interactional social, emotional, and physical life. Your responses are confidential. "HX" refers to history and "SA" refers to sexual abuse.

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Age:</b>
<b>Tribe:</b>	<b>Date completed:</b>

	Alcoholism	Drug Addiction	Mental Abuse	Physical Abuse	Emotional Abuse	Adult SA Survivor	Child SA Survivor	Justice System Involvement	Suicide Attempts	HX of Boarding School	HX of Foster Home Placement	HX of SA in Foster Home	HX of SA in Boarding School	Self-harm
														
You														
Your Child 1														
Your Child 2														
Your Child 3														
Your Child 4														
Your Mom														
Your Dad														
Your Grandma														
Your Grandpa														
Your Sister														
Your Brother														
Your Partner														
Your Aunt(s)														
Your Uncle(s)														
Your Cousin(s)														
Your Partner's Parents														

## Lesson 6

## ASSERTIVENESS QUOTIENT

Test your assertiveness quotient (AQ) by completing the following questionnaire. Use the scale below to indicate how comfortable you are with each item.

1. **Makes me very uncomfortable.**    2. **I feel moderately comfortable.**    3. **I am very comfortable with this.**

There may be some situations which are not relevant to you or your particular lifestyle. In such cases, try to image how comfortable you might feel if you were involved in the situation.

- Speaking up and asking questions at a meeting
- Commenting about being interrupted by a person, directly to them at the moment they interrupt you
- Stating your views to an authority figure (e.g., minister, boss, therapist, father, mother)
- Attempting to offer solutions and elaborating on them, speaking in front of a group
- Maintaining eye contact, keeping your head upright, and leaning forward when in a personal conversation
- Going out with a group of friends when you are the only one without a "date"
- Being especially competent using your authority or power without labeling yourself as "impolite, bossy, aggressive or parental"
- Requesting expected service when you haven't received it (e.g., in a restaurant or a store)
- Being expected to apologize for something and not apologizing since you feel you are right
- Requesting the return of borrowed items without being apologetic
- Receiving a compliment by saying something assertive to acknowledge that you agree with the person complimenting you
- Accepting a rejection
- Not getting the approval of the most significant person in your life, discussing another person's criticism of you openly with that person, or telling someone that they are doing something that is bothering you
- Refusing to get coffee or to take notes at a meeting, pick up the tab at a restaurant, or open the door for someone just because you are male/female
- Saying "no", refusing to do a favor when you really don't feel like it, or turning down a request for a meeting
- Telling a person when you think they are manipulating you
- Commenting to a male/female who has made a patronizing remark to you (e.g., "You have a good job for a woman"; "You've got good taste for a man"; "You're not flighty, emotional, or hysterical like most women"; or "You share your feelings more than most men")
- Telling a prospective lover about your physical attraction to them before such statements are made to you
- Initiating sex with your partner
- Showing physical enjoyment of an art show or concert in spite of others' reactions
- Asking to be caressed or telling your lover what feels good to you
- Expressing anger directly and honestly when you feel angry
- Arguing with another person
- Telling a joke
- Listening to a friend tell a story about something embarrassing
- Responding with humor to someone's put-down of you
- Disciplining your own children
- Disciplining others' children
- Explaining the facts of life or your divorce to your child

The AQ test can help you discover the areas where you are not assertive. If you have a predominance of 1's and 2's, you might consider an assertiveness training class to help you become a more spontaneous and honest person. For those of you who have twenty or more 3's, congratulations! You are already an assertive person.



## **SIMPLE WAYS TO RELIEVE STRESS**

Watch a sunset  
Sing a song  
Listen to music  
Dance  
Have a cup of tea  
Take a break  
Keep a journal  
Get up early  
Play a drum  
Throw a ball  
Plant a flower  
Eat a snack  
Light a candle  
Walk in the rain  
Take a bubble bath  
Ask for what you need  
Give a compliment  
Give a blessing

Go to the beach  
Pet a dog  
Blow bubbles  
Take a walk  
Ask for help  
Do it now!  
Hum a tune  
Meditate  
Prioritize  
Play with a child  
Say "No"  
Read a book  
Laugh out loud  
Run in the park  
Avoid negative people  
Go to bed on time  
Clean a closet  
Watch a sunrise

Be positive  
Tell a joke  
Take a nap  
Write a letter  
Smile  
Stretch  
Practice patience  
Do Tai Chi  
Give a hug  
See a movie  
Set limits  
Practice kindness  
Lie in the sun  
Talk to a friend  
Take a deep breath  
Walk a labyrinth  
Go barefoot  
Say a prayer

### **Write 5 ways you deal with stress:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



**Lesson 7**

**TRADITIONAL NATIVE VALUES AND NON-TRADITIONAL VALUES**

**Traditional**

listening/observation skills	self-exploratory in child's life
cooperation	restitution
religion-way of life	character = status
group emphasis	bilingualism
indirect criticism	belief in the unseen
modesty, humility	illness = imbalance
individual autonomy	traditional oriented
orientation to present	cooperation with nature
passivity, calmness	spiritual, mystical
generosity	personal caution
extended family	
cultural pluralist	

**Non-Traditional**

verbal skills	assimilation
competition	strict discipline
religion-segment of life	punishment
individual emphasis	degree = status
direct criticism	monolinguals
self-importance	believe in the seen
interference/involvement	illness = physical or mental
orientation to future	process oriented
activity, restlessness	control over nature
savings	skeptic
nuclear family	personal openness

<b>What's confusing to many non-Natives about Alaska Natives? Many perceive that:</b>	<b>What's confusing to many Alaska Natives about non-Natives? Many perceive that:</b>
They look down or away.	They stare straight at your eyes.
They often say little. They are slow to answer questions. They keep silent in group situations.	They talk too much. They talk so fast. They always talk first. They chatter. They interrupt.
They avoid situations involving talking to strangers. They only talk freely to close acquaintances.	They talk to strangers and people they don't know. They come right over and want to give you a firm handshake as if you're good friends.
They play down their own abilities. They never say anything about themselves. They don't always seem to like being given compliments in public.	They brag about themselves. They don't give others a chance to talk. They give compliments in public.
They approach things globally.	They're often linear, direct, and explicit. They say: "give it to me straight"; "straight talk"; and "don't beat around the bush".
They act as if they expect things to be give to them.	They don't help people even when they can.
They don't plan (in the way that non-Natives see or understand).	They always talk about what's going to happen later. They think they can predict the future.
They avoid direct questions. They never start a conversation. They talk off the topic.	They ask too many questions, some of which are intrusive and personal. They interrupt a lot. They only talk about what they are interested in.
They are slow to take a turn in talking. They are indirect, and inexplicit. They don't make sense. They take too long to answer a question. They give one-word answers.	They just go on and on when they talk. They aren't careful when they talk about people or things.
They just leave without saying anything.	They have to say 'goodbye' even when they can see that you are leaving.

**Lesson 8**

**PRIMARY FEELINGS COMMONLY TURNED INTO ANGER**

Abandoned	Fearful	lazy	Scared
Alone	Foolish	Left out	Selfish
Angry	Frantic	Lonely	Shocked
Annoyed	Free	Lost	Shy
Anxious	Frightened	Loved	Silly
Ashamed	Frustrated	Loving	Small
Awesome	Furious	Mad	Smug
Bad	Good	Mean	Sneaky
Beautiful	Glad	Miserable	Startled
Big	Gloomy	Moody	Strong
Bold	Guilty	Nervous	Stupid
Bored	Happy	Nice	Sure
Brave	Helpful	Open	Talkative
Calm	Helpless	Overwhelmed	Tense
Cheated	Homesick	Panicked	Terrible
Clever	Horrible	Passive	Terrified
Closed	Humiliated	Peaceful	Threatened
Compassionate	Hurt	Picked on	Tired
Confused	Ignored	Playful	Trapped



Cruel	Impatient	Pleased	Troubled
Curious	Inadequate	Pretty	Ugly
Different	Independent	Proud	Uncertain
Discounted	Insecure	Quiet	Unhappy
Discouraged	Insulted	Rejected	Unloved
Embarrassed	Invisible	Relaxed	Upset
Energetic	Isolated	Relieved	Violent
Excited	Jealous	Restless	Vulnerable
Exhausted	Joyous	Sad	Wonderful
Fantastic	Kind	Safe	Worried

## Lesson 11

# FORGIVENESS

### What Does It Mean to Forgive and Let Go?

Forgiveness and letting go are perhaps among the most difficult steps in the process of recovery. There is something about having problems that makes us feel that we are alive and have a purpose. To forgive and let go—to truly release the held resentment—fills us not only with a sense of freedom but also a sense of dread—a fear of the void. If I don't have a problem or painful issue to work on, what will there be of me—without my problems to identify with and occupy my thoughts and emotions, who am I?

### Why Do We Forgive?

We forgive if we are wise, not for the other person, but for ourselves. We forgive, not to erase a wrong, but to relieve the residue of the wrong that is alive within us. We forgive because it is less painful than holding on to resentment. We forgive because without it we condemn ourselves to repeating endlessly the very trauma or situation that hurt us so. We forgive because ultimately it is the smartest action to take on our own behalf. We forgive because it restores to us a sense of inner balance.

### What Is Letting Go?

Letting go is the act of forgiveness made manifest. Forgiveness too often gets confused with doing good or with certain kinds of superior behavior. This type of forgiveness is bogus and benefits no one. Letting go is an act of surrender, a recognition and acceptance of things as they are, a coming to grips with the fact that we live in a less than perfect world. It is not just a thought but an actual cellular release, a constant daily process, a turning over.

### What Are the Steps on the Way?

There are two very difficult steps or stages on the way to real forgiveness. The first lies in admitting and accepting that there is something to forgive, that life was not what we wished it had been. This requires a working through of the denial and euphoric recall that has sustained us to date. It also implies a willingness to look at and deal with deep issues; to walk the walk and talk the talk. Another even more difficult step lies in the recognition of when to let go of the past and move on. This kind of maturation and growing up is not something that people from less than functional or adequate pasts find easy to do. Because it is a letting go of the dreams and fantasies that the good parent will come and make things right, it requires true mourning of the lost childhood or parent, an acceptance that what happened happened, and cannot be undone. It is letting go of the dream and giving up the search.

### How Does the Process Work?

This process requires a willingness to know one's own truth and the courage and strength to feel pain that has been hidden in silence. Once one comes to embrace this approach, as much as it can hurt, it feels better than acting out or repressing trauma. After past issues become clear and resolved, it takes discipline to maintain new behaviors and perceptions. This is what recovery is all about, a journey toward the light. Carl Jung said that we do not really resolve problems; instead, we "climb to the top of a mountain; meditate on them until we see them differently." A Course in Miracles calls a miracle a "shift in perception." When we feel the pain but do not connect with the origin of the pain, when something in our present triggers a past hurt or resentment, it feels as if it is entirely about the present, and the past gets projected onto the present. Problems that are loaded with past issues make the present feel unmanageable. Energy patterns that store memories can rise to a conscious level, be looked at for what they are, felt, and released in what Sigmund Freud called, "making the unconscious conscious."

### When Does Forgiveness Happen?

Forgiveness and letting go occur after there is enough personal restoration so that forgiving another no longer compromises the self. In order to rebuild we move through the process of bringing the alienated self back to life and integrating it into the total being. We come to understand that there are other people in the world as well, also with needs and dreams, and that we need to understand and live with them. To forgive and let go are part of coming of age, of taking one's life into one's own hands, of accepting life for what it is and is not, and living it, one day at a time, with choice. A process that occurs over an extended period of time, forgiveness comes when the readiness is there. One day we observe that something that was there is gone and that we are free to move on. Forgiveness

## VISUALIZATION EXERCISE

### Close your eyes

#### Imagine you are lying on a calm, beautiful beach:

- Relax your toes—if there is any tension, tightness, or discomfort, release it.
- Imagine feeling the warm water from the waves covering your toes and then receding.
- Guide participants through relaxing their abdomen, shoulders, elbows, fingers, shoulders, and head.

#### Imagine that you:

- Stand up and follow a path that leads to a forest.
- Go through the forest.
- See a meadow.
- In the meadow there is a rock, and on the rock is a spiritual teacher or guide.
- Giving you a gift—note the gift.
- Is there any wisdom you would like to receive?
- The guide is disappearing.
- White light from the sky is coming into your heart.
- Feel it going through your body—note how it feels.
- Allow the light to slowly leave the body and be released back up to the sky.
- You can come back to this light at any time.

- Follow the path back to the beach—there is a dock.
- By the dock is a boat—think of every person you haven't forgiven (this can include your parents and yourself)—put them in the boat.
- Slowly undo the knot tying the boat.
- Slowly let the boat go out to sea.
- Tell the people
  - I love you.
  - I forgive you.
  - I bless you.
  - I don't have to see you if I don't want to.
  - I don't have to hear you if I choose not to.
  - I can choose today who I want to be around.
- Faces of the people fade.
- Now they are shadows and silhouettes.
- The boat is gone—you've let them go or said what you wanted to.
- You walk back to the beach and lie down.
- Wiggle your nose.
- Wiggle your toes.

### Come back to this room.

### Open your eyes.

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Yéil Koowú Shaawát (Raven Tail Woman) Women's Group

**Facilitator's Guide**

**PHASE I: Anger, Stress, and Communication**

*A 12-Week Curriculum for Native Women*

2022