

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

# Facilitator's Guide

**PHASE II: PERSONAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**

*A 14-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  
320 W. Willoughby Ave., Suite 300, Juneau, AK 99801



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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 II 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. When reading long passages, pause frequently to allow time for reflection and questions from participants.



*Amalia Monreal*

## Yéil Koowú Shaawát Curriculum

## Phase II: Personal and Family Development

The goal of Phase II is to provide education and support around family of origin issues, parenting, healthy families, codependency and relationships, victimization, and healing.

### Purpose

Phase II guides participants in examining their childhood experiences, families of origin, personal histories, and past and present relationships. Following an orientation session, Phase II begins with participants developing genograms, which are pictorial displays of a person's family relationships and medical history, enabling them to assess more closely the legacies passed down from one generation to the next. In Phase II, participants:

- are guided in making connections between their experiences in childhood and their behaviors in adulthood, including choice of partners and parenting styles.
- examine healthy and unhealthy characteristics of their family of origin and how these characteristics play out in their present lives.
- learn about family systems, relationships and codependency, victimization, secondary wounding, unresolved grief, and intergenerational trauma.
- learn the benefits of self-examination, introspection, and reflection.

Phase II comprises 13 lessons delivered over 14 weeks (Lesson 2 spans two weeks).

### Group Outcomes

Participants in Phase II will:

- Use genograms as a tool to identify patterns and cycles within their families of origin.
- Consider what ways of thinking and patterns of behavior they inherited from earlier generations.
- Recognize types of abuse, dysfunctional patterns, and unhealthy behaviors.
- Work on processing grief and the stages of healing.
- Learn about belief systems and how they can contribute to violent and abusive behaviors.
- Learn about the process of victimization, secondary wounding, and victim thinking and labeling.
- Learn how trauma is stored in the mind and body.
- Learn what triggers are and how to recognize their own triggers and warning signs.
- Learn about codependency and how to take healthy risks around intimacy.
- Explore how adverse childhood experiences can affect relationship patterns in adulthood.
- Learn about healthy and unhealthy family systems.

- Learn the value of time-outs, breathing, and other calming physical and mental exercises.
- Process feelings and share issues in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Understand the importance of giving themselves compassion, patience, and grace.
- Appreciate that change is possible and achievable.
- Learn from the wisdom and experiences of a guest speaker from the community.

## Lessons Overview

The table outlines the major topics covered in Phase II lessons.

LESSONS	MAJOR TOPICS
1. Orientation & Introduction to Phase II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phase II Curriculum Overview</li> <li>▪ Group Rules and Expectations</li> <li>▪ Every Picture Tells a Story Activity</li> </ul>
2. Genograms (Two Weeks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intergenerational Trauma</li> <li>▪ Using Genogram as a Tool to Understand Trauma and Family History</li> <li>▪ Processing Feelings From Genogram Activity</li> </ul>
3. Frequency, Severity, and Impact of Abuse, Beginning with Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Alcoholism, Addiction, and Family and Domestic Violence</li> <li>▪ Exploring Personal Trauma</li> <li>▪ Dysfunctional Family Patterns</li> <li>▪ Abuse and Intergenerational Patterns</li> </ul>
4. Film	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Using Film to Learn About Historical Trauma and the Boarding School Era</li> </ul>
5. Loss and Grief, Stages of Healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kübler-Ross's Grief Cycle</li> <li>▪ Resolving Grief</li> <li>▪ Stages of Healing</li> </ul>
6. Native Spirituality as a Way of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Medicine Wheel Concepts</li> <li>▪ Mind Mapping Exercise</li> <li>▪ Healthy Support Systems and Change</li> </ul>
7. Belief Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Development of Belief Systems Through the Stages of Life</li> <li>▪ Trauma and Its Roots</li> <li>▪ Healthy Belief Systems</li> <li>▪ Five Types of Dysfunctional Family Dynamics</li> </ul>
8. Levels of Victimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Victimization</li> <li>▪ Secondary Wounding</li> <li>▪ Victim Thinking</li> <li>▪ Post-Traumatic Responses and Symptoms</li> </ul>
9. Triggers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding Our Triggers</li> <li>▪ Trauma, Triggers, and the Body</li> <li>▪ Coping With Triggers</li> <li>▪ Disclosing Trauma</li> </ul>



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<b>10.</b> Love, Relationships, and Intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Codependent, Independent, and Interdependent Relationships</li><li>▪ Recovery from Codependency</li><li>▪ Healthy Relationships and Intimacy</li><li>▪ Personal Power and Autonomy</li><li>▪ Knowing Oneself</li></ul>
<b>11.</b> Family Systems: Changing the Things We Can	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Types of Family Systems</li><li>▪ Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development</li><li>▪ Healthy Families</li></ul>
<b>12.</b> Guest Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Learning from the Speaker's Healing Journey</li></ul>
<b>13.</b> Graduation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Graduation Ceremony</li></ul>

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# Lesson 1 – Orientation & Introduction to Phase II



## Lesson Purpose

As in Phase I, the goal of the first lesson of Phase II is to begin creating an environment that promotes a feeling of safety and comfort for group participants. 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. Participants will engage in a group activity to promote feelings of solidarity and commitment to one another as the group goes through Phase II together. The goal is to give participants a feeling that they are not alone but are in this healing journey together. This lesson also introduces concepts around the cultural and spiritual components of healing.

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.
- Collaborate with participants on developing the group and program guidelines and participant expectations and responsibilities.
- Participate in an activity about appreciating and respecting differences.
- 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
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Cedar, or Sweetgrass, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- Eagle Feather and Talking Circle Centerpiece
- Folders or Binders for Distributing to Participants
- Selections for Opening and Closing Reading
- For Every Picture Tells a Story Activity: Wide variety of pictures and printed sayings cut from magazines, printed pictures from the Web, inspirational words, and quotes. Pictures should include landscapes, architecture, people, many types of families, animals, places, concepts, and activities. Include pictures that evoke emotions, e.g., a sunset on the beach.
- Sticky Notes and Shoe Box

## Handouts

- “The Circle” Passage
- Group Consent and Intake Forms<sup>1</sup>
- Information Gathering Questionnaire (optional)
- Group Guidelines and Expectations
- 14-Week Syllabus
- Talking Circle Prayer
- Every Picture Tells a Story

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome and Introductions (35 minutes)

#### A. Welcome (5 minutes)

**Welcome** participants to the group, new and returning. Thank everyone for coming and making a commitment to Phase II.

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

#### B. Facilitator Introduction (10 minutes)

**Introduce yourself.** You may refer to the sample materials in Phase I, Lesson 1. 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 personal history
- Prior experience with the Yéil Koowú Shaawát program
- Why you are interested in leading this group

Cofacilitators may also introduce themselves at this time.

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<sup>1</sup> A sample group consent form, intake form, and information gathering questionnaire can be found in the Appendix for Phase I. The Phase II syllabus can be found in the Appendix of this document.

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

**Read "The Circle" passage.** Read this passage to remind participants of 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 the facilitator 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 (20 minutes)

**Guide participants in introducing themselves.** You may request that returning participants go first, then invite those new to the group to introduce themselves. If the meeting is held virtually, you may call on each participant to introduce themselves. Remember to ask participants to turn on their cameras. 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
- Prior experience with the Yéil Koowú Shaawát program
- What they hope to get out of Phase II—what their personal goals are for participating in the 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.

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.

## II. Introducing Phase II (25 minutes)

### A. Values Agreement, Expectations, and Introduction to Phase II (20 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>2</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. If meeting virtually, you may display the handout onscreen.

An example handout can be found in Phase I. 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.

**Read the purpose and outcomes** for Phase II on pages 2-3.

**Distribute the 14-week syllabus** for Phase II.<sup>3</sup> Briefly review each week's topic and ask the group if there are questions.

**Read the lesson purpose** for Lesson 1 on page 5.

### B. 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. Every Picture Tells a Story Activity (45 minutes)

The purpose of this exercise is to help participants learn that before we can judge a person or how they acted in a certain situation, we need to learn about that person's life, the reasons for their behavior, and what they were thinking and feeling in that moment. Participants will learn that the desire to understand another person comes when we listen from our hearts and seek to understand from a place of compassion, non-judgement, openness, and inclusivity. Participants will be reminded that none of us will look at the same situation in the same way because no two life experiences are the same and no two people are the same. The activity is intended to demonstrate the necessity to respect our differences and to learn from each other—recognizing that our beliefs, values, and feelings all affect how we interpret actions and understand ourselves and one another.

<sup>2</sup> Sample forms are provided in the Appendix for Phase I.

<sup>3</sup> See sample in the Appendix.



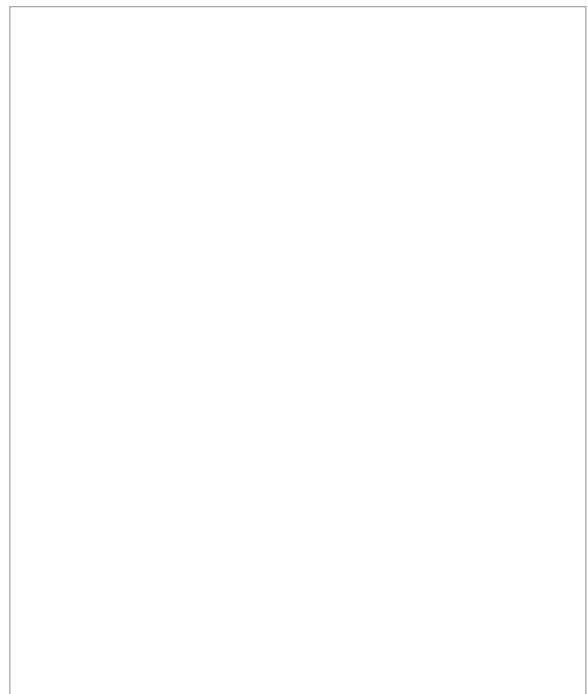
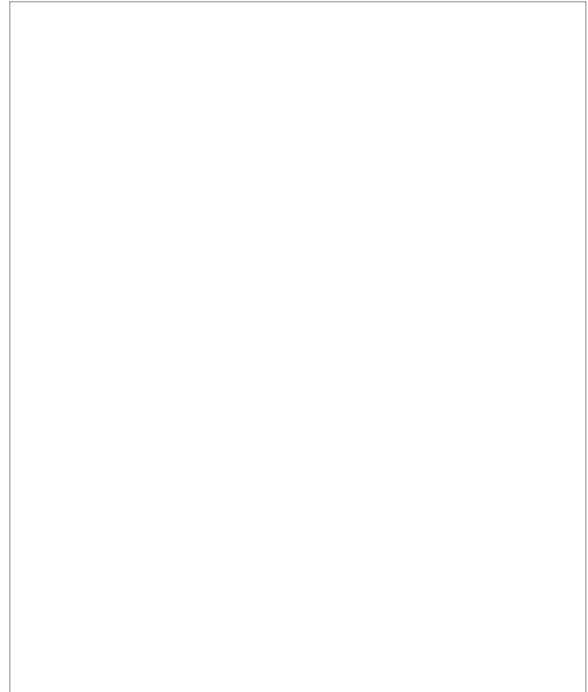
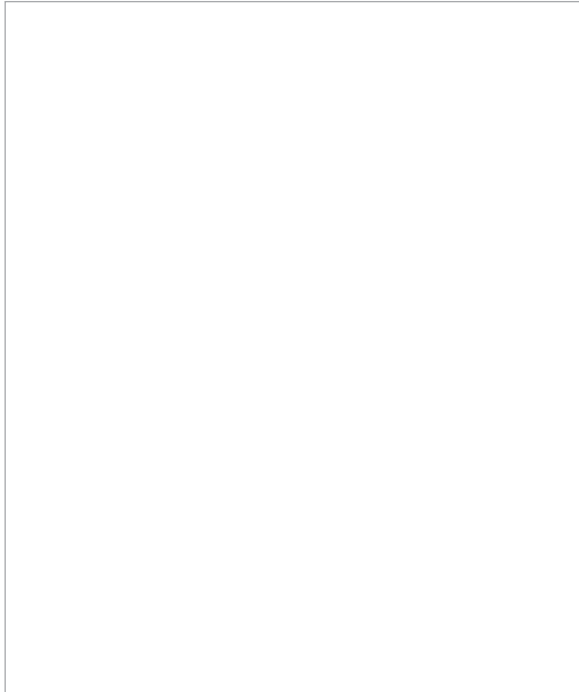
This activity is best conducted in person when possible. Read the procedure in advance to prepare for leading the activity.

Procedure:

1. Distribute the sheet on the page below, paper or notebooks, and pens or pencils to participants.
2. Place a variety of pictures cut from magazines on a table or on the floor in the center of the group circle. The pictures can include a mother and daughter embracing, faces showing different emotions, sunsets, people, and places. (If conducting this activity virtually, you can send participants the handout below and a set of pictures by email.)
3. Have each participant choose two pictures from the center of the circle. Ask participants to choose pictures that move them, interest them, and remind them of something or sometime in their life.
4. Ask participants to briefly write down a few sentences about why they chose those pictures and what they mean to them. The sentences go in the top two boxes on the handout.
5. Ask participants to exchange pictures with another group member and write a few sentences about their impressions of the pictures they are now holding. The sentences go in the lower two boxes.
6. Have the participants who exchanged pictures explain to one another why they chose their pictures, what they mean to them, and what they think about them.
7. Have participants compare their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs.
8. Ask for volunteers to share their experience with the activity with the group. Ask them to hold up the picture they now have in their possession and speak to what they see or feel about it. Then ask the person who originally selected the picture to speak about it and what the picture says to or about them. Point out the different meanings and interpretations by each person. When ready, ask for the 2nd picture and repeat the procedure. You can repeat this process with each pair if it's a small group.
9. Conclude by discussing the activity's purpose with participants and asking them to reflect on applying the concepts of compassion, non-judgment, openness, and inclusivity to their work with the program.



## **EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY**



## IV. Creating an Altar (15 minutes)

The facilitator encourages participants to prepare an altar or sacred space for themselves at home. If meeting in person, the facilitator is encouraged to bring objects of special or personal significance as sample items to use for their own altar, which can be displayed while explaining this activity. If meeting virtually, the facilitator and participants can use their Web cameras to show the altars they've created.

**The facilitator explains** the concept of the altar—its spiritual significance and the benefits of creating a tangible place and space where the participant can focus on their healing work when at home.

**Read** the following to introduce the concept of the altar and the need for creating a special healing space:

*An altar is a sacred place to draw spiritual strength. It is considered an object of reverence; it is where you worship or talk to the Creator. An altar is a table, a place where you make healing medicine for yourself. It is where you draw your power, where you voice what you want, a prayerful place with intention and meaning. What you put on your altar helps it become a sacred space. Place sacred objects on your altar, objects that have special meaning for you. These could be photographs, an object that you found that you admired enough to keep, for example, a round smooth rock, a rock shaped like a heart, a stuffed animal, a poem, or a prayer. The shape and material used to build the altar is also symbolic. Your altar can be permanent or something you set up anytime you want to connect with yourself and the Creator.*

**Read** about the benefits of creating a special healing space:

*Setting up your altar will help ready you for group and increase your concentration, honesty, and compassion for yourself and others. This way, when you come to group, you are ready. You have prepared your space or place at the altar to listen, learn, and share your experiences. So, whether you put chimes or candles or incense or sage or other special objects on your altar, you prepare your space for the Creator and to be ready for this time in group with each other.*

*You will get out of this program what you put into it. If all you give is all you get, give it all you've got! A wise woman in group said it like this, "No one is going to save you; you have to save you. You want it better, a better life; you have to work and keep working. But it's worth it." Your altar is the space created for you to share what is in your heart to develop a relationship with the Creator.*

Encourage participants to create an altar or sacred space for themselves at home on their own time. You can continue to provide support and guidance on this process throughout Phase II. When meeting virtually, participants can volunteer to share their altars using their Web cameras during Talking Circles in future sessions.

## V. Talking Circle (50 minutes)

Review the Talking Circle guidelines with the group. Explain how, traditionally, whoever has the sacred object (e.g., 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, however, the facilitator or co-facilitator may speak out of turn to help guide the conversation and provide support and responses to individual participants as they are checking in.<sup>4</sup>

**Read:**

*One of the essential components of group meetings is a check-in time where participants share the 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 facilitator or co-facilitator may speak out of turn to help guide the conversation and provide support and responses to individual participants as they are checking in.*

*When sharing, if you are open to feedback, you can say so 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*

<sup>4</sup> Additional Guidance on Talking Circles can be found in the Facilitator's Guide Introduction and in Phase I, Lesson 4.

*know that you are finished when you say the words, "All my relations." I will call on 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.*

*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. Does anybody have any questions before we get started with the Talking Circle? I'm going to pass the [sacred object] to [participant name].*

You then lead the Talking Circle for participants to share the high and low points of their week and provide support for one another. If the group is meeting virtually, the facilitator will indicate the next person to speak.

**VI. Closing (10 minutes)**

Read or ask a participant to read the "Talking Circle Prayer" provided below. Thank everyone for coming to group.

**TALKING CIRCLE PRAYER**

*By Walter Ray Denny, Chippewa, Rocky Boy's Reservation*

Creator, Heavenly Father, you who are known by so many names,  
I ask you to be a part of our lives today.

Whisper to us your wisdom, be in our presence here.  
If we become doubtful and afraid, help us.

It is true that for some of us, we live our lives with a lot of trial and error.  
I ask for your guidance in this way.

A Chippewa Elder once wrote that there are many dwellings.  
Each dwelling we create ourselves.

The house of anger, the house of despair,  
The house of self-pity, the house of indifference,  
The house of negativity.

The house of positivity,  
The house of hope, the house of joy, the house of peace,  
The house of cooperation, the house of giving.

Each of these houses we visit every day.  
We can stay in any house as long as we wish.  
We create the dwelling, we stay in the dwelling, we leave when we wish.

We can create new rooms, new houses.  
This becomes our world until we leave for another.

Creator, no one can determine which dwelling we choose to enter.  
No one has the power to do so, only us.

Let each of us choose wisely today.

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 group may have new participants joining in Phase II. The facilitator encourages returning attendees to be warm, welcoming, and supportive of the new participants.
- Returning participants pass on their knowledge to the new participants, and they are expected to assert themselves a little more in this phase and provide healthy models to new participants. For example, they can model healthy communication skills by sharing openly and honestly as a result of completing previous phases and electing to remain in the program.
- Some activities can be conducted easily virtually, while others cannot. Facilitators should be mindful of this when selecting and planning lesson activities.

## Resources

- Bopp, J., Bopp, M., Brown, L., Lane, P., & Lucas, P. (1989). *The sacred tree*. Wilmot, WI: Lotus Light.
- Coyhis, D., Simonelli, R., & Clark, D. (n.d.). *Wellbriety movement*. Sharing Culture. <http://sharingculture.info/wellbriety-movement.html>
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- National American Indian and Alaska Native Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network. (2022). *Traditional "Talking Circle" or "healing through feeling"*. <https://attcnetwork.org/centers/national-american-indian-and-alaska-native-attc/traditional-talking-circle-or-healing>
- Skaggs, K. (2022.) *How to create an altar as a focal point for awakening your spiritual self*. Center for Shamanic Education and Exchange. <https://shamaniceducation.org/how-to-create-an-altar-as-a-focal-point-for-awakening-your-spiritual-self/>
- White Bison. (2002). *The Red Road to wellbriety: In the Native American way*. White Bison, Inc.
- White Bison. (2013). *Wellbriety movement: The four laws of change* [Digital poster]. Coyhis Publishing. [https://www.wellbriety.com/docs/TheFourLawsposter\\_coyhis11X17.pdf](https://www.wellbriety.com/docs/TheFourLawsposter_coyhis11X17.pdf)



## Lesson 2 – Genograms (Week 1 of 2)



### Lesson Purpose

Over two weeks, participants will develop genograms to document family relationships, identify intergenerational trauma, explore patterns and cyclic relationships in their family histories, and identify and explain behaviors and beliefs associated with traumatic events and experiences.<sup>5</sup> Participants develop genograms as a tool to explore and examine the intergenerational family messages, patterns, themes, and cycles that are repeated in the participant’s family. Participants will learn how to use the genogram symbols and language. Guided by the facilitator, participants begin by drawing their genograms, and they then work on processing their family history and stories, including their feelings, responses, and reactions about what they have learned from the activity. Issues expected to surface include alcoholism, domestic violence, deep loss, death, abandonment, substance use, child abuse, and involvement with the child welfare system.

### Objectives

- Learn about the process and symbols used for developing a genogram.
- Develop individual genograms of four family generations: grandparents, parents, themselves, and their children.
- Identify and explore the traumas that have impacted their family intergenerationally.

### Materials

- Paper (8.5” x 14” or larger) and Pens/Pencils, Colored Pens, Erasers
- 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

<sup>5</sup> The facilitator can allow the genogram activity to continue over more than two weeks if additional time is needed to complete and review the genograms.

## Handouts

- The Past
- Key to Genogram Symbols
- Sample Genograms
- Questions to Assist With Your Genogram Analysis
- Prayer for Today and Every Day

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participants' 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Read** or ask a participant to read the "The Past" provided here.

#### 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

#### F. Read Lesson Purpose

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

### THE PAST

The reason we must dredge up the past, whether or not it causes discomfort, lies in the understanding that as long as we deny the past, as long as we pretend that the hurts are not there, the longer it will take to be healed. Let this circle represent what we can do together, we cannot do alone, what you hear here, stays here, here, here.



## II. Genogram Activity (90 minutes)

Explain that Phase II will focus on family of origin issues and what was happening in your family while growing up. Through the genogram activity, participants will identify four generations of their families, including grandparents', parents', their own generation, and their children's.

We recommend conducting the genogram activity in person. If you choose to meet virtually, email the handouts to participants in advance of the meeting. You can also display them onscreen during the virtual session while you guide participants through the activity as if you were in the room with them.

**Provide handouts** for participants to reference.

- **Key to Genogram Symbols** – Refer to Websites in the lesson resources to identify a system and key that you would like to use. You can modify and adapt the key to the needs of your participants. You can search the Web for “genograms” to find a variety of sample genograms and resources. A sample of basic symbols is provided below.
- **Sample Genograms** – It will be helpful to share examples of completed genograms that follow the key your group is using. You can find examples on the Web.
- **Questions to Assist With Your Genogram Analysis** – Sample questions are provided on page 20 below. These questions identify what family information should be covered in the genograms.

**Draw a basic sample genogram, possibly of your own family and representing four generations, as a demonstration.**

Begin writing at the top of the (physical or virtual) whiteboard with the grandparents' generation. Draw squares and circles representing males and females to illustrate the basics of how to draw a genogram. Include the paternal and maternal sides and illustrate the offspring.

**Refer to the handouts to explain what information should be covered and common variations in a genogram.** Refer to the key, which identifies symbols representing male, female, deceased, substance abuse, residential school, foster care, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional/mental abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence/household violence.

**Distribute paper to participants and ask them to begin drawing their genograms.** Instruct participants to include the paternal and maternal sides and illustrate the offspring, then identify which offspring is their parent and the offspring from this union. Participants will identify themselves along with their siblings and then focus on themselves and identify their partner(s) and children.

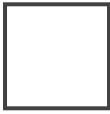
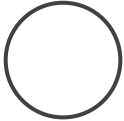



Once the participants have been able to draw their basic diagrams, including four generations, instruct them on what information needs to be included for family members. Participants will list family members by first names only or initials and their ages, adding information about the ages at which specific outstanding events occurred (e.g., removed and placed in foster care) and for how long the events lasted. For example, identify that your mother survived forced attendance at a boarding school between [start year] and [end year]. Use the symbols in the key which will identify things they have experienced. Include:

- time in boarding schools and foster homes.
- alcohol/substance use disorder and addiction.
- separation by removal, imprisonment, and relocation.
- instances of abuse and neglect, including physical, mental, emotional, sexual, or spiritual.

- mental health issues, suicide attempts or completions, institutionalizations, marriages, and divorces.

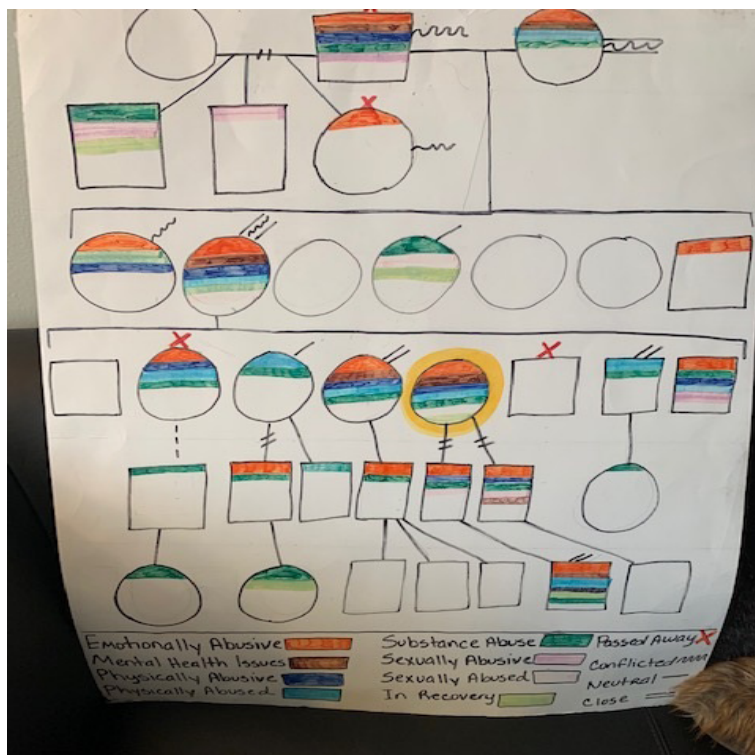
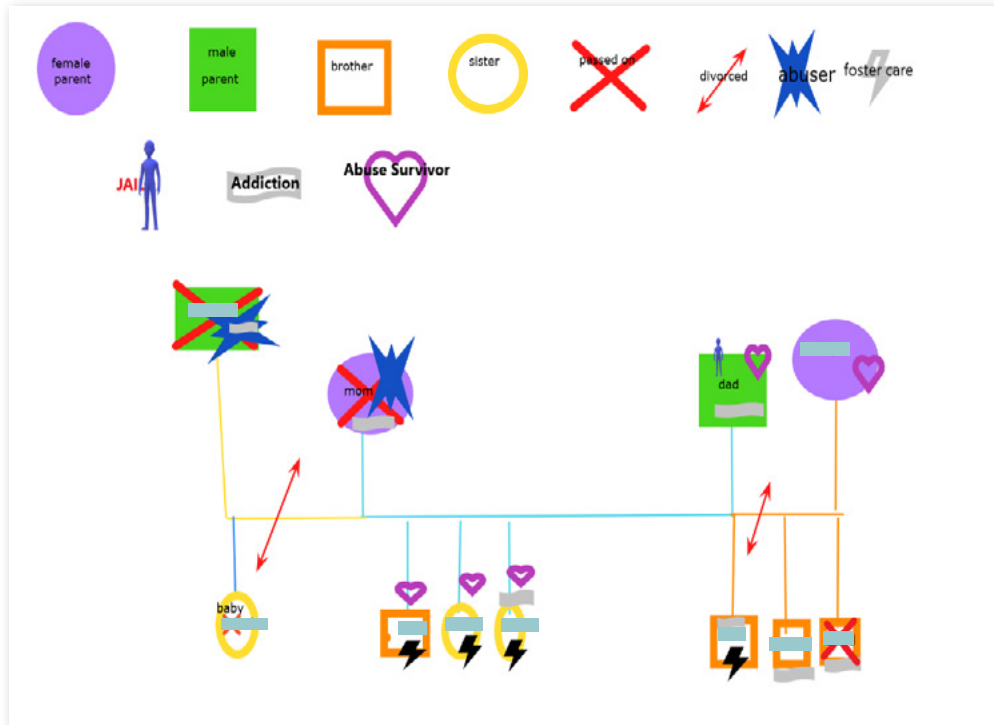
Participants will identify patterns that are repeated, such as alcohol or substance abuse, family violence, etc., among generations. Colored pencils can be used to define the emotional relationship among family members.

It is critical that the facilitator check in with participants often to help and support them during this assignment. Those participants who do not complete the genograms during the session can finish them the following week. Participants will present their genograms to the group next week.

<b>Basic Genogram Symbols</b>	
	<b>Male</b>
	<b>Female</b>
	<b>Deceased</b>
	<b>Residential School</b>
	<b>Physical abuse</b>

**Example Genograms**

Genogram developers use different methods and "keys." This genogram was completed using a color-coding system. Facilitators may use the traditional key or whatever process works best for them.



Genograms should be detailed enough to illustrate answers to the following questions:<sup>6</sup>

**QUESTIONS TO ASSIST WITH YOUR GENOGRAM ANALYSIS**

*Developed by Amalia Monreal*

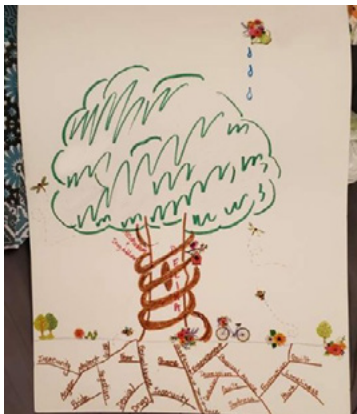
1. Give the names and ages of all family members you can remember for the last four generations.
2. Where did these family members live? In what city/town/village? Where do these family members live now? For what reason did they move?
3. Who passed away in the family? When? Of what? When were they born? Married? Separated? Divorced?
4. Was subsistence a big part of your parents' or grandparents' lives?
5. Which family members used alcohol or drugs? Which family members have been arrested? Had mental health problems? Died by suicide? Or had other serious problems?
6. What patterns are repeated, such as alcohol or drug use, mental health challenges, domestic/family violence, or other behaviors?
7. Are there themes or cycles that seem to repeat in your family intergenerationally?
8. How did people get along in your family? Who was close to whom?
9. Do you currently have children in foster care?

If you were removed from your biological family, please mark this in the genogram. For example, if you lived in multiple foster homes, use the symbol for foster care **X 4** (however many times you were in foster placement).

If you have questions, please call for the facilitator or co-facilitator.

**Tree Activity (Optional)**

For those participants who've already developed a genogram or find the genogram activity too triggering or emotionally stressful, the facilitator can have that individual do a tree diagram instead. In this activity, traumas are identified in the roots. Ask the participant to draw a tree. Each branch represents a generation. The roots of the tree depict the traumas or unhealthy and dysfunctional patterns that have developed. Examples are provided below.



<sup>6</sup> In this context, subsistence refers to cultural ways of fishing, hunting, gathering, and preserving their own food, e.g., using a smoke house to smoke salmon or cutting up their own deer meat and processing to use over the winter months. These practices suggest a traditional lifestyle and can indicate they grew up in or have relatives in a Native village.

**III. Talking Circle (70 minutes)**

Review the Talking Circle guidelines from Lesson 1 with the group. The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the genogram activity to the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to the genogram activity. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

**IV. Closing (10 minutes)**

Provide a closing reading or invite a participant to read something of their choosing to bring the group to closure. You can read "Prayer for Today and Every Day," provided below or use a selection from a meditation book or inspirational reading.

**PRAYER FOR TODAY AND EVERY DAY**

Owner and Creator of All Things

I Stand here on Mother Earth asking for Guidance and Help

Because I Believe in You.

As I look Around Me and Into the Heavens

I see All of Your Wonderful Work around Me.

No one but the Great Holy One could do these Things.

As I look at Myself again, I See

Your Wonderful work in Me as a Human.

To be able to Think and Talk is a Miracle Itself.

Give me a Long Life and Good Health to be with my People a

Long Time.

Help Me get along with All People.

Help Me that I may say Good Things about People instead of

Bad Things.

Thank You for Everything.

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**

- See the resources below for information about genograms. Conduct a Web search for "genogram" to find a wealth of additional information, including examples and guidance.

## Resources

- Bowen, M. (1985). *Family therapy in clinical practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Pope, N. D., & Lee, J. (2015). *A picture is worth a thousand words: Exploring the use of genograms in social work practice*. *The New Social Worker*. <https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/practice/a-picture-is-worth-a-thousand-words-genograms-social-work-practice/>
- Silvestri, K. (2019, June 30). *Who do you think you are? Clues from your family of origin*. *Psychology Today*. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/wider-lens/201906/who-do-you-think-you-are>
- *The basic genogram symbols*. California Social Work Education Center. [Adapted from: Power, Thomas A., ACSW. *Family Matters: A Layperson's Guide to Family Functioning*. Hathaway Press, New Hampshire, 1992]. [https://calswec.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/genogram\\_symbols\\_063018.pdf](https://calswec.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/genogram_symbols_063018.pdf)
- Therapist Aid. (n.d.). *Genograms for psychotherapy*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/genograms>
- Therapist Aid. (n.d.). *Genogram symbol sheet*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/genogram-symbols>
- Walter, I. R. (2016, November 29). *Family of origin exploration for the therapist: How to create your genogram*. *Family Therapy Basics*. <https://familytherapybasics.com/blog/2016/11/26/family-of-origin-exploration-for-the-therapist-create-your-genogram>



## Lesson 2 – Genograms (Week 2 of 2)

### Lesson Purpose

In week two of Lesson 2, participants are provided more time to complete their family genograms, and they present their completed genograms to the group.

### Objectives

- Learn about the process and symbols used for developing a genogram.
- Develop individual genograms of four family generations: grandparents, parents, themselves, and their children.
- Identify and explore the traumas that have impacted their family intergenerationally.

### Materials

- Paper (8.5" x 14") and Pens/Pencils, Colored Pens, Erasers
- 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

- Key to Genogram Symbols
- Sample Genograms
- Questions to Assist With Your Genogram Analysis

### Lesson Guidance

#### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

##### A. Attendance

**Call out participants' 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the

facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading or ask a participant to read.** Facilitators may select their own reading related to the themes of this lesson.

### 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

### F. Read Lesson Purpose

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

## II. Genograms (90 minutes)

At this time, resume the genogram activity from the previous week. In the second week of genograms, participants should be finishing up with drawing their genograms and working on identifying the emotional relationships between family members and their own emotional relationships with family, including with their children.

Begin with validation that completing a genogram can be interesting, insightful, and distressing at the same time. Reiterate that the genograms will focus on family of origin issues; what was happening in your family while growing up. Ask participants:

- what the experience has been like for them so far.
- if they were able to complete their genograms or if they got stuck and needed more information or explanation.
- if their handouts were helpful in drawing their genograms.

Review how to draw the emotional relationships to indicate whether family members have a close emotional relationship or whether the relationship is neutral or conflicted. Colored pencils can be used to define the emotional relationship among family members. If meeting in person, the facilitator should provide paper and colored pencils. If working individually and from home, participants can use what they have available.

In the first part of the session, assist participants with completing and finalizing their diagrams. When all participants have completed their genograms or tree diagrams, they will present them. If meeting in person, this will be done in group. If meeting virtually, have participants share their screens to present their genograms or ask them to send you their genogram (e.g., by email or text message) to display on their behalf.

## III. Talking Circle (70 minutes)

Review the Talking Circle guidelines from Lesson 1 with the group. The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the genogram activity to the Talking Circle.

The facilitator leads a Talking Circle for participants to share the high and low points of their week and provide support for one

another. Encourage participants to talk about what they experienced while working on their genograms—what feelings came up for them and how did they process those feelings? After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, “All my relations”.

#### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

Provide a closing reading or invite a participant to read something of their choosing to bring the group to closure. You can use a selection from a meditation book or inspirational reading.

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 understand that the genogram activity can arouse intense feelings for participants. In addition, though the facilitator doesn't ask participants to discuss the activity with their loved ones, they may choose to do so, and this can bring strong reactions, both positive and negative. These discussions can open the door to constructive conversations with sharing and healing but may also lead to denials and defensiveness. The facilitator should be prepared to support participants with these potential challenges.
- The facilitator should remind participants of the importance of having and sharing compassion with one another and themselves.

#### Resources

- Bowen, M. (1985). *Family therapy in clinical practice*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Pope, N. D., & Lee, J. (2015). *A picture is worth a thousand words: Exploring the use of genograms in social work practice*. The New Social Worker. <https://www.socialworker.com/feature-articles/practice/a-picture-is-worth-a-thousand-words-genograms-social-work-practice/>
- Silvestri, K. (2019, June 30). *Who do you think you are? Clues from your family of origin*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/wider-lens/201906/who-do-you-think-you-are>
- *The basic genogram symbols*. California Social Work Education Center. [Adapted from: Power, Thomas A., ACSW. *Family Matters: A Layperson's Guide to Family Functioning*. Hathaway Press, New Hampshire, 1992]. [https://calswec.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/genogram\\_symbols\\_063018.pdf](https://calswec.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/genogram_symbols_063018.pdf)
- Therapist Aid. (n.d.). *Genograms for psychotherapy*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-guide/genograms>
- Therapist Aid. (n.d.). *Genogram symbol sheet*. <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/genogram-symbols>
- Walter, I. R. (2016, November 29). *Family of origin exploration for the therapist: How to create your genogram*. Family Therapy Basics. <https://familytherapybasics.com/blog/2016/11/26/family-of-origin-exploration-for-the-therapist-create-your-genogram>



## Lesson 3 – Frequency, Severity, and Impact of Abuse, Beginning with Childhood



### Lesson Purpose

In this lesson, participants will learn about the system dynamics of the alcoholic and substance abusing family, referencing the American Medical Association's disease model of addiction, adult roles in the family, family of origin roles, and common feelings and behaviors of adult children of alcoholics. Participants will learn and discuss what abused children learn growing up in dysfunctional families and how children react to abuse and neglect (i.e., passively and aggressively). Participants will learn about intergenerational and multi-generational patterns, similarities, contrasts, and distinctions. Participants will expand their understanding of what happened to them and how those experiences influenced their choice of partner(s), parenting style, problem-solving abilities, and coping skills. Participants will understand the need to be patient with themselves and to be compassionate as they participate in the work necessary for the change process.

### Objectives

- Learn about the impact on children who grow up in a dysfunctional family.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the frequency and severity of abuse and neglect and its impact beginning with their childhood.
- Expand their understanding of what happened to them, their survived traumas, and how those experiences influenced their choice of partners, their parenting styles, their problem-solving abilities, and coping skills.
- Learn from current and popular literature about alcoholism and chemical dependence and domestic and family violence.

### 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

- System Dynamics of the Alcoholic Family
- What is Abuse
- Abused Children Learn . . .
- Common Feelings and Behaviors of Adult Children of Alcoholics
- Boundaries and Roles

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participants' 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. A recommended source is *Spring Meditations with Native Elders*, compiled by Don Coyhis. Facilitators may also select their own reading related to the themes of this lesson.

#### 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

#### F. Read Lesson Purpose

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

**II. Education Material (100 minutes)**

**A. Review Genograms from Lesson 2 (10 minutes)**

Begin by summarizing the previous lesson's work with genograms, identifying intergenerational themes and experiences that group members have in common. Discuss how there is more than one type of abuse witnessed or experienced and how the impact can last for generations.

**B. System Dynamics of the Alcoholic Family (45 minutes)**

The facilitator describes dysfunctional families and how dysfunctional patterns can be passed through generations.

**Read:**

*A dysfunctional family is a family in which conflict, misbehavior, and often child neglect or abuse on the part of individual parents occur continuously and regularly, leading other members to accommodate such actions. Children sometimes grow up in such families with the understanding that such a situation is normal. Please understand that family issues that are not addressed in one generation are passed down to the next, who end up dealing with repeating the trauma.*

The facilitator provides information on what motivating feelings cause the alcoholic to drink. The facilitator can illustrate this story by referencing the book *The Little Prince* by French author, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. You can tell the story of what happened when the little prince went to the planet where the alcoholic lived. The prince asks the alcoholic why he drinks, and the alcoholic answers, "Because I'm ashamed." The prince then asks, "What are you ashamed of?" And the alcoholic answers, "Because I drink." The point of the story is that alcoholism is an insidious, progressive disease that keeps cycling, while a physical and psychological dependence continues developing. The facilitator can in turn explore what feelings motivate behaviors in other members of the alcoholic family by identifying: 1. Role, 2. Motivating Feelings, 3. Identifying Symptoms, and 4. Payoff: a) for the individual b) for the family.

**Review** the table below based on the work of Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse.

**System Dynamics of the Alcoholic Family**

ROLE	MOTIVATING FEELING	IDENTIFYING SYMPTOMS	PAYOFF FOR INDIVIDUAL	PAYOFF FOR FAMILY	POSSIBLE PRICE
DEPENDENT	Shame	Chemical use	Relief of pain	None	Addiction
ENABLER	Anger	Powerlessness	Importance; self-righteousness	Responsibility	Illness; "martyrdom"
HERO	Inadequacy; guilt	Overachievement	Attention (positive)	Self-worth	Compulsive drive
SCAPEGOAT	Hurt	Delinquency	Attention (negative)	Focus away from Dependent	Self-destruction; addiction
LOST CHILD	Loneliness	Solitariness; shyness	Escape	Relief	Social isolation
MASCOT	Fear	Clowning; hyperactivity	Attention (amused)	Fun	Immaturity; emotional illness

After reviewing the table's content, have participants do an exercise on the roles they may have taken on in their own childhood in addition to those identified in the literature. Write the roles in the table above on the board and have group members come to the board and circle roles they recognize, adding any of their own. Additional roles you may wish to discuss include:

Baby	The responsible one	Little mother
Little wife	Juvenile delinquent	The failure
Daddy's girl	The brain	The one always left out
The whiner	The bully	The slow learner
Sicko	Crazy	Parent to parents
Little miss sunshine	Stupid	The messenger

**C. What is Abuse? (10 minutes)**

Use the handout below to review different forms of abuse and to examine the continuum of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Help participants recognize and identify how abuse often progresses over time.

**WHAT IS ABUSE?**

Abuse takes many different forms. It can be physical, emotional, or sexual. It can happen every day or every once in a while. It can occur in public places, like a store or a park, or in private places, like your home or your car. It can leave you with bruises and bumps on your body or leave you with an emotional or physical hurt or injury inside that no one can see. It can happen when you are a young child or when you are an adult. The person being abusive could be your spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, child, or parent.

Power and control are the core of domestic violence. No one deserves to be beaten no matter what they have done. It is the abuser who is responsible for his or her violent behavior, not the person being hurt. You cannot stop the abuser from being abusive, but you can keep yourself safe. Understanding the information here can help.

The continuums below show how relatively minor incidents escalate into serious violence. The intensity and frequency of violence always increases for emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.

**Emotional Abuse Continuum**

Jokes	Ignoring feelings	Jealous	Isolation	Convinces you that you're worthless, crazy	Suicide
Insults	Name Calling		Public Humiliation	Threats	Homicide

**Physical Abuse Continuum**

Scratch	Slap	Push	Hit	Kick	Thrown	Choke	Beat	Burn	Suicide
Deny physical needs		Bite	Shove	Throw objects		Use weapons		Homicide	

**Sexual Abuse Continuum**

Sexual jokes	Ignore sexual needs	Control contraceptives	Force sex with self or others	Suicide		
Uncomfortable tickling	Sexual putdowns	Humiliation	Affairs	Rape	Sex after beating	Homicide

**D. What Abused Children Learn (15 minutes)**

Referencing the handout that follows, discuss what abused children learn growing up in dysfunctional and abusive families, whether witnessing or experiencing. Work with participants to identify whether they or their own children are reacting to abuse/neglect passively or aggressively and share with the group.

**ABUSED CHILDREN LEARN . . .**

- People Who Love You Hurt You
- Not to trust . . .
- Low Self-Esteem
- What Happened Becomes Familiar and the Norm
- Scared of the New Non-Abusive Situation
- The Children Might Try to Provoke Abuse
- The Children Learn to Act in Sexual Ways
- Children Become Overstimulated
- Children Become Jumpy and Nervous
- Children Hold Back: They Need to Re-Learn Spontaneity



**How Children React to Child Abuse and Neglect**

**PASSIVE**

Withdraw  
 Hide  
 No Physical or Eye Contact  
 Don't Play  
 Don't Move  
 Don't Laugh  
 Stare Blankly  
 Depressed  
 Regress

Physical Pains  
 Self-Mutilate  
 Nightmares  
 Eating Disorders  
 "Space Out"  
 Dissociate  
 Becoming Part of Something  
 to Not Hurt So Much

**AGGRESSIVE**

Kick  
 Bite  
 Punch  
 Hurt Others  
 Fight  
 Appear to Be Angry  
 Hurt Small Animals  
 Hurt Themselves

**What (if anything) are you seeing with your child that concerns you?**

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## E. Common Feelings and Behaviors of Adult Children of Alcoholics (10 minutes)

**Ask a volunteer to read** the handout that follows from *The 12 Steps – A Way Out*. The purpose is to help participants understand what adult children of alcoholics often believe and experience.

### THE 12 STEPS—A WAY OUT

#### Common Feelings and Behaviors of Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA)

1. We have feelings of low self-esteem as a result of being criticized. We perpetuate these parental messages by judging ourselves and others harshly. We try to cover up our poor opinions of ourselves by being perfectionistic, controlling, contemptuous, and gossipy.
2. We tend to isolate ourselves out of fear and to feel uneasy around other people, especially authority figures.
3. We are desperate for love and approval and will do anything to make people like us. Not wanting to hurt others, we remain “loyal” in situations and relationships even when evidence indicates our loyalty is undeserved.
4. We are intimidated by angry people and personal criticism. This causes us to feel inadequate and insecure.
5. We continue to attract emotionally unavailable people with addictive personalities.
6. We live life as victims, blaming others for our circumstances, and are attracted to other victims as friends and lovers. We confuse love with pity and tend to “love” people we believe we can pity and rescue.
7. We are either super-responsible or super-irresponsible. We take responsibility for solving others’ problems or expect others to be responsible for solving ours. This enables us to avoid being responsible for our own lives and choices.
8. We feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves or act in our own best interest. We give in to others’ needs and opinions instead of taking care of ourselves.
9. We deny, minimize, or repress our feelings as a result of our traumatic childhoods. We are unaware of the impact that our inability to identify and express our feelings has had on our adult lives.
10. We are dependent personalities who are so terrified of rejection or abandonment that we tend to stay in situations or relationships that are harmful to us. Our fears and dependency stop us from ending unfulfilling relationships and prevent us from entering into fulfilling ones.
11. Denial, repression, isolation, control, shame, and inappropriate guilt are legacies from our family of origin. As a result of these symptoms, we feel hopeless and helpless.
12. We have difficulty with intimacy, security, trust, and commitment in our relationships. Lacking clearly defined personal limits and boundaries, we become enmeshed in our partners’ needs and emotions.
13. We tend to procrastinate and have difficulty following projects through from beginning to end.
14. We have a strong need to be in control. We overreact to change over which we have no control.

*This is a description not an indictment.*

**F. Boundaries and Roles (10 minutes)**

**Read** or ask a participant to read the handout below about boundaries and roles. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform. Encourage participants to add in roles they adopted in childhood.


## BOUNDARIES

**Which boundaries were violated in your childhood?**

**Do you own a sense of self, or "I am a person"?**

**What roles did you take on in childhood?**

baby scapegoat little mother little wife the "brain" the slow learner daddy's girl the spoiled child the whiner crazy the message girl	clown dummy juvenile delinquent the responsible one the failure parent to parents the bully "always left out" little miss sunshine sicko stupid
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*If your role was omitted above, please write it in.*

**III. Talking Circle (60 minutes)**

The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

**IV. Closing (10 minutes)**

The facilitator reads or asks a participant to read the passage below, "Positively Negative," as a closing reading.

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

**POSITIVELY NEGATIVE**

A member of Alcoholics Anonymous once sent columnist Ann Landers the following:

We drank for joy and became miserable.

We drank for sociability and became argumentative.

We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.

We drank for friendship and made enemies.

We drank for sleep and awakened exhausted.

We drank for strength and felt weak.

We drank to feel exhilaration and ended up depressed.

We drank for "medicinal purposes" and acquired health problems.

We drank to get calmed down and ended up with the shakes.

We drank for confidence and became afraid.

We drank to make conversation flow more easily and the words came out slurred and incoherent.

We drank to diminish our problems and saw them multiply.

We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell.

We drank to cope with life and invited death.

*Bits & Pieces, May 1990, p. 18.*

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 the lesson, the facilitator asks participants questions to encourage discussion of personal connections and relationships in participants' childhood and adult life that relate to the lesson material.
- Facilitators can ask participants if they see or recognize their own experiences in the lesson material, whether from childhood, recently, or currently.
- Participants provide active listening while demonstrating support to one another by offering words of encouragement and sharing similarities and likenesses.
- This lesson is intended to provide current and historical data and research: current school of thought about alcoholism and chemical dependence, domestic or family violence.

## Resources

- Alvernia University. (2022). *Coping with addiction: 6 dysfunctional family roles*. <https://online.alvernia.edu/infographics/coping-with-addiction-6-dysfunctional-family-roles/>
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2016). *Intergenerational patterns of child maltreatment: What the evidence shows*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/intergenerational/>
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021). *Child welfare practice to address racial disproportionality and disparity*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/racial-disproportionality/>
- Coyhis, D. (1994). *Spring meditations with Native American Elders*. Books Beyond Borders, Inc.
- de Saint-Exupery, A. (2018). *The Little Prince* (I. Testot-Ferry, Trans.). Wordsworth Editions.
- Friends in Recovery. (1989). *The 12 steps, a way out: A working guide for adult children from addictive and other dysfunctional families*. San Diego, CA: Recovery Publications.
- Lipari, R. N., & Van Horn, S. L. (2017, August 24). *Children living with parents who have a substance use disorder*. The CBHSQ Report. Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Rockville, MD. [https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report\\_3223/ShortReport-3223.html](https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_3223/ShortReport-3223.html)
- Martin, S. (2017, May 15). *How addiction impacts the family: 6 family roles in a dysfunctional or alcoholic family*. PsychCentral. <https://psychcentral.com/blog/imperfect/2017/05/how-addiction-impacts-the-family-6-family-roles-in-a-dysfunctional-or-alcoholic-family>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *Improving Cultural Competence*. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series No. 59. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4849. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma14-4849.pdf>
- Wegscheider-Cruse, S. (1989). *Another chance: Hope and health for the alcoholic family*. Science & Behavior Books.
- Wegscheider-Cruse, S. (1991). *The family trap: No one escapes from a chemically dependent family*. Onsite Training & Consulting.



# Lesson 4 – Film



## Lesson Purpose

Lesson 4 uses media, movies, and documentaries to explore the issues of abuse and intergenerational and historical trauma that participants identified in their genogram work. For example, you may choose to view the film, *Our Spirits Don't Speak English: Indian Boarding School* (Rich Heape Films, Inc.), which tells the story of how Native peoples experienced abuse and violence as a result of colonization and provides clarity about the roots of violence and abuse. The purpose of the lesson is to recognize issues of loss and grief resulting from historical injustices, the boarding school era, and separation from family, Tribe, culture, traditional ways of living, customs, and rituals. Participants will understand the historical loss of cultural identity, values, beliefs, and cultural practices.

## Objectives

- Learn about historical trauma and the boarding school era when many Native children experienced removal and separation.
- Recognize issues of loss and grief resulting from historical injustices, the boarding school era, and separation from family, Tribe, culture, traditional ways of living, customs, and rituals.
- Understand the historical loss of cultural identity, values, beliefs, and cultural practices.

## 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

**Call out participants' 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

## C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. You 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 they have 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 recommended film for this lesson is *Our Spirits Don't Speak English: Indian Boarding School*. Introduce the film to participants and explain that the film is a documentary depicting the removal of Native children during the boarding school era. The film features personal testimonials of those who lived through this experience and what happened to them as result of that experience. Explain that the film tells the true history and roots of problems the Native community still struggles with today: violence, sexual abuse, abandonment, loss and grief, alcoholism, and drug addiction. Point out a particular testimonial wherein the speaker has a visceral response to his experiences as an example of what post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) looks and sounds like.

The facilitator may instead select one of the films listed below or a film of their choice:

- *Powwow Highway* (1988) (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0098112/>)
- *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* (1993) (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108551/>)
- *When a Man Loves a Woman* (1994) (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111693/>)
- *Woman Thou Art Loosed* (2004) (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0399901/>)

We recommend conducting this lesson in person rather than virtually. This way the facilitator is present to observe participant reactions to the film, support participants with any emotional responses, and debrief and discuss with the benefits of in-person communication. If the meeting must be held virtually, videos can be played and shared through the virtual meeting platform.

This will be easiest when the films are available online, such as on YouTube. For videos only available on DVD, the facilitator will need to ensure their computer has a DVD drive or other way to load the video on the computer for playing and sharing with participants virtually.

### 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. Encourage participants to talk about their thoughts, opinions, and feelings in response to the film. Ask participants what they may have already known about the history of the boarding school era and what they learned from watching the film.

### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

The facilitator may close with a short reading of their choice. 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 5 – Loss and Grief, Stages of Healing



### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to understand the importance of identifying our childhood losses and grieving those things lost to the victim, such as childhood, stable upbringing, adequate parenting, virginity, and so forth. Participants will recognize that these losses have a profound impact on who we are today. Participants will learn about Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's Grief Cycle. They will examine what being stuck in grief looks like and how unresolved grief becomes unfinished business for the psyche. Participants will learn the stages of healing and the necessity of recognizing the child within—the child within is the voice carrying the feelings we were unable to express as a child. This is who was hurt, and this is who needs to be healed. Healing the child within oneself heals the adult as well.

### Objectives

- Examine the losses experienced in their lifetimes and recognize the importance and value of acknowledging these losses, especially when experienced in childhood, and how these losses impact their adult lives today.
- Learn about Kübler-Ross's stages of grief and express their knowledge and experience with these stages.
- Learn that unresolved grief can mean we are stuck in our anger, fear, resentment, or denial, which can contribute to addiction or other destructive behaviors that also keep us from processing our grief.
- Learn about and discuss the stages involved in the healing process.
- Understand the importance of having and sharing compassion with one another and ourselves.

### 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

- Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle
- Healing the Children Within

- Resolving Grief
- Don't Give Up—Change Takes Time
- Stages of Healing

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participants' 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. A recommended reading is "Everything is a Circle."<sup>7</sup> Facilitators may also select their own reading related to the themes of this lesson.

### EVERYTHING IS A CIRCLE

Everything an Indian does is in a circle, and that is because the Power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round. In the old days when we were a strong and happy people, all our power came to us from the sacred hoop of the nation, and so long as the hoop was unbroken, the people flourished. The flowering tree was the living center of the hoop, and the circle of the four directions nourished it. The east gave peace and light, the south gave warmth, the west gave rain, and the north with its cold and mighty wind gave strength and endurance. This knowledge came to us from the outer world with our religion. Everything the Power of the World does is done in a circle. The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind, in its greatest power, whirls, birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing and always come back again to where they were. The life of man is a circle from childhood to childhood, and so it is in everything where power moves. Our teepees were round like the nests of birds, and these were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop, a nest of many nests, where the Great Spirit meant for us to hatch our children.

—Black Elk

<sup>7</sup> Black, E., Neihardt, J. G., & Deloria, V. (1988). *Black Elk speaks: Being the life story of a holy man of the Oglala Sioux*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

## 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

## F. Read Lesson Purpose

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

# II. Education Material (90 minutes)

## A. Kübler-Ross's Grief Cycle (20 minutes)

Share a handout with participants about the stages of the Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle and review the content together. Websites with information about the grief cycle are provided in the lesson resources below. You may wish to provide a diagram or graphic so participants can visualize the roller-coaster ride of activity and passivity as the person wiggles and turns in their desperate efforts to avoid the necessary changes. Encourage discussion by asking participants if they can identify with any of the stages and if so, what circumstance/story was happening when they experienced the stages in this cycle.

For example, **ask**:

*Has anyone experienced acceptance? What does acceptance feel like?*

Emphasize that as you recognize each loss, you need to grieve your loss. You may also describe three simplified stages as:

- (1) Accept the reality of the loss (this is like the death of something lost as well as someone)
- (2) Grieve
- (3) Form a new relationship with the loss (this is like rebirth)

Discuss why it is important to identify and process grief. **Read:**

*There are many times that it is difficult to go on with your life after experiencing a profound loss, especially if you are trying to put that loss behind you. Or you may be in denial that it happened and that may be as far as you can go with it because it is too painful to feel; so you may avoid the necessary grieving. As long as it is unresolved material or unfinished business, it remains unsettled, and you cannot form a new relationship. One way to move through the cycle is to move through the loss. For some of you that may be the loss of your own childhood, the loss of adequate parenting, or a stable upbringing (loss of healthy rearing by your caregivers); or it could be loss of virginity. The loss of culture may be something lost especially if the participant experienced removal from the home, foster care, or adoption. The point is we need to accept it, grieve it, and form a new relationship with it. Kübler-Ross is helping us understand what is happening while it is happening and what to expect next. But the 3-step process of accepting and forming a new relationship with the loss or losses is necessary to heal and move forward.*

## B. Discussion (20 minutes)

Ask participants to identify some of the losses they have experienced in their lives and discuss them with the group. Reinforce that it is critical to grieve these losses or traumas in the presence of safe and supportive people. You cannot bury the trauma or put it behind you and deny it. This is unhealthy and it is unsafe, and there is no peace inside of you.

Describe how not dealing with past losses can also create unhealthy bodies—referring to what happens to the body psychosomatically as discussed in Phase I.

**Read:**

*When we cannot release a loss or traumatic event by talking about it, or taking some action, it can then be expressed in the body (for example, as migraines, back pain, or asthma). It may not feel safe to remember, so we work to keep that denial intact. We may be using substances to keep our pain and our memories repressed, which can expose us to risk. I believe you need to re-experience your pain, tell your story, and weave the trauma or experience of trauma into the very fabric of your life. "It becomes part of who I am, I bring it with me; and I am stronger for it. I am becoming healthy and whole because I can remember and talk about it."*

**C. Healing the Children Within (15 minutes)**

Read or have a participant read the handout called "Healing the Children Within." If meeting in person, you may provide copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the Web meeting platform. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. Ask participants to talk about why it is important to heal the child within us that experienced loss. We are responsible for healing ourselves—this is part of our healing journey. Discuss what needs to be said to process this grief and who is responsible for saying these words. Ask participants what they will need to heal other than what is listed in the handout (e.g., courage, openness, trust, etc.).

**HEALING THE CHILDREN WITHIN**

Who are the children within?

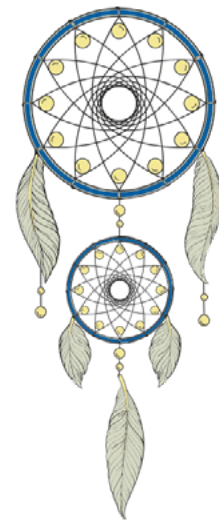
1. Voices inside carrying the feelings you were unable to express as a child.
  - a. Fear, anger, shame, despair
  - b. Excitement, joy, happiness, love—these have been denied
2. Whether you were ignored, belittled, or abused, you learned early on not to feel safe and not to feel.
3. You learned that to feel meant to be vulnerable and to be vulnerable meant not to survive. You wanted to survive. You learned not to feel.

A connection to your intuition or real self and an ability to identify and process feelings are basic to our emotional well-being.

Many of us feel displaced and unprepared for today's challenges. We need ways to deal with these feelings.

We need to learn how to identify, express, release, and transform what we feel.

Learning to do this demands that you experience what you felt in childhood because that was when you first learned about feelings.



**D. Resolving Grief (10 minutes)**

Read or have a participant read the handout called "Resolving Grief." If meeting in person, you may provide copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the Web meeting platform.

**RESOLVING GRIEF**

There are so many emotions when we are grieving a loss.  
and often they come at odd times when we are least expecting it.  
But, we need to experience all the emotions and simply be there  
with the pain.  
We need to look at what was lost—all of it.  
Identifying the losses within the losses—looking at them with courage.  
And, with time, we can learn to see the ways we have idealized our  
old relationships and attachments.  
How we have made them better in our minds,  
without remembering the bad times as well as the good.  
We can learn to see it all—the whole thing—the way it really was,  
with the balance every relationship contains.  
Little by little, as we are ready, we see and we feel—  
taking pieces at a time.  
And, with patience, we will be able to put our emotions, our caring,  
our energy into new relationships.  
We will not forget, but we will go on living as whole human beings.



**E. Don't Give Up—Change Takes Time (10 minutes)**

The facilitator reads or asks a participant to read the handout, "Don't Give Up Change Takes Time." Discuss this handout and encourage dialogue. After reading through the handout, you may ask: Why is it important to heal? Remind participants that there is no wrong answer. It can be very personalized and individualized. The facilitator asks another question: What does it mean to form a new relationship with the loss?

**Don't Give Up—Changes Take Time**  
 The healing process is a continuum.  
 It begins with an experience of survival,  
 an awareness of the  
 fact that you lived through the abuse  
 and made it to adulthood.  
 It ends with thriving.  
 The experience of a satisfying life  
 no longer programmed by what happened  
 to you as a child.

**F. Stages of Healing (15 minutes)**

Read or have a participant read the "Stages of Healing." If meeting in person, you may provide copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the Web meeting platform.

## STAGES OF HEALING

**The decision to heal**, this is a conscious decision that you need/want to heal from something that is tender and hurtful.

**Remembering**, this is not reliving the experience, it's about accepting that it happened, that it was a reality for you. It's believing that it happened.

**Breaking the silence**, this is the decision to say that it was real, it is talking with a counselor or another trusted individual, journaling or writing about it. Taking part in a Talking Circle, or another type of support group.

**Understanding that it was not your fault**, you did not do anything to make it this way, nor did you have any control over it or could make it stop.

**Making contact** with the child within, this is who was hurt and this is who needs to be healed, healing the child within yourself heals the adult as well.

**Trusting yourself**, you have made a decision, trust that you are capable of healing yourself.

**Grieving/mourning**, part of the healing process is to grieve those things lost to us.

**Anger**, the backbone of healing.

**Spirituality**, recognizing that we do not have to do this alone, we can seek connection with the Great Mystery asking Creator to give us the courage to begin this process.

**Resolution/moving on**, this stage is harder than it looks, because coming to terms with and moving on from what happened to us can be an act of acceptance that perhaps we did not get the parent or caregiver we deserved, but that we are resolving our past within ourselves and coming to terms with our past.

### III. Talking Circle (70 minutes)

The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

## IV. Closing (10 minutes)

The facilitator provides a closing reading. You can read the quotation below, invite a participant to read something of their choosing to bring the group to closure, or read a selection from a meditation book or inspirational reading.

***Everything heals.  
Your body heals.  
Your heart heals.  
Your mind heals.  
Your soul repairs itself.  
Your happiness will always come back.  
Bad times don't last.***

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

- Encourage participants to continue to build rapport and deepen their trust with one another and the group process by sharing their personal hardships and accomplishments with each other.
- Encourage participants to provide active listening while demonstrating compassion to one another by offering words of encouragement and support.
- Remember to seek input from participants and affirm their contributions to discussions about the material covered.

## Resources

- ChangingMinds.org. (n.d.). *The Kubler-Ross grief cycle*. [http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change\\_management/kubler\\_ross/kubler\\_ross.htm#bac](http://changingminds.org/disciplines/change_management/kubler_ross/kubler_ross.htm#bac)
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- White Bison. (2002). *The Red Road to wellbriety: In the Native American way*. White Bison Inc.



## Lesson 6 – Native Spirituality as a Way of Life



### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to continue the teachings of the Medicine Wheel and its major concepts from Phase I. The intention is to introduce participants to a Native American philosophy, viewpoint, or way of life. Participants will deepen their understanding of the Medicine Wheel teachings, which are based on relationships that are in sets of four: four directions, four seasons, the four elements, four races, the life cycle, the four inner areas of growth, and the Four Sacred Laws. Participants will recognize concepts related to the Medicine Wheel, which is round like a circle and refers to cycles, interconnectedness, balance, spirituality, and harmony. Participants will engage in a mind-mapping exercise to further their understanding of the Four Sacred Laws and how to apply them to make wanted and positive changes. Participants will come to understand that the Medicine Wheel teachings recognize that struggle is part of growth and change. Participants will also apply the Southeast Traditional Tribal Values that reflect “Our Way of Life”; these are the teachings of the Southeast Indigenous peoples, who created the values to help us understand how to behave toward one another and how to walk in the world. Participants will engage in conversation about the Tribe’s traditional values and what they believe is important to practice and teach to the next generation.

### Objectives

- Learn about the Southeast Traditional Tribal Values, “Our Way of Life.”
- Learn about the teachings of the Medicine Wheel.
- Participate in a mind-mapping activity.
- Recognize that our Indigenous culture can heal and support sobriety. “Haa kusteeyi guganeix, Our way of life will heal.”

### 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

- A Tree Goes Through Four Seasons
- Plant Your Own Garden

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participants' 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. A recommended reading is "To Make Medicine" by Wooden Leg (Cheyenne). Facilitators may also select their own reading related to the themes of this lesson.

To 'make medicine' is to engage upon a special period of fasting, thanksgiving, prayer, and self-denial—even of self-torture. The procedure is entirely a devotional exercise. The purpose is to subdue the passions of the flesh and to improve the spiritual self. The bodily abstinence and the mental concentration upon lofty thoughts cleanses both the body and the soul and puts them into or keeps them in health. Then the individual mind gets closer towards conformity with the mind of the Great Medicine above us.

—Wooden Leg

#### 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

#### F. Read Lesson Purpose

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

## II. Education Material (70 minutes)

### A. Demonstrating Tribal Values (20 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>8</sup> Past groups strove to reflect this value. Facilitators should relate their Tribe’s values to each lesson throughout the curriculum. Explain that these values help us to understand how to behave with one another and how to be in this world.

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.

### B. Introduction to Native Spirituality (20 minutes)

The Medicine Wheel was introduced in Lesson 1 of Phase 1. This lesson provides additional information about the Medicine Wheel. If the Medicine Wheel is not a significant concept in your Tribe, you can discuss your own concepts, beliefs, practices, or ceremonies.

#### Review:

- The Medicine Wheel (MW) is an approach to the world, a philosophy or way of life.
- The MW represents relationships that are in sets of four. This is why four is considered a sacred number among many Tribes. It can represent:
  - » The Four Directions: East, South, West, and North
  - » The four seasons
  - » The time of day: morning is in the East, where the sun rises. Evening is in the West, where the sun sets.
  - » The four elements: air, water, fire, and earth
  - » The four indigenous races or nations: Red, Black, Yellow, and White, coming together to make one race, the human race.
  - » The life cycle
  - » The four inner aspects of growth: mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual
- The MW teaches that when a person is wounded, abused, or traumatized, all four aspects of the self are impacted. For healing to occur, all four aspects of the self must be involved in the process. For example, physical abuse impacts the individual physically, emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically. In healing from abuse and trauma, it is necessary to address all four aspects of the self. Healing the whole self is necessary to regain balance and harmony.

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

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 resources below.

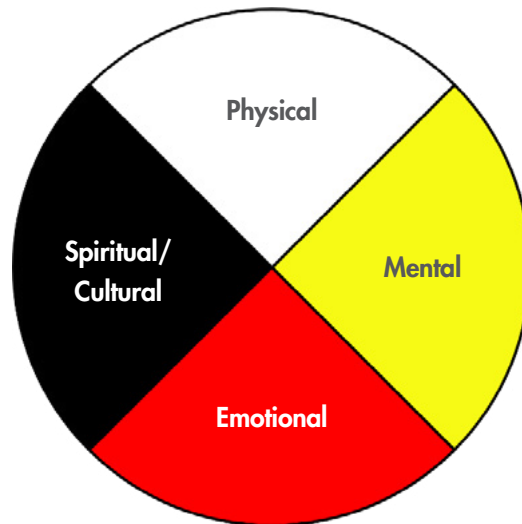


Image source: Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medicine\\_Wheel.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Medicine_Wheel.png)

**C. Four Sacred Laws (20 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. *A healing forest must be created. (This is typically your support system, such as your family and this group.)*

Participants should think about creating a vision of who they want to be in relation to others, traditions, and community, as this gives them something to move toward in place of using drugs, consuming alcohol, or engaging in other unhealthy behaviors. Work on focusing participants on respect: respect for themselves and their vision, for all things, Elders, traditions, children, community, and the Earth. This will translate into a great learning that their thoughts and feelings are sacred, that they are good *at* something and good *for* something. Don Coyhis explained it this way: “give them the power to create a life-changing vision for themselves.”

**Read:**

*The Medicine Wheel, Tribal value statements, and the Four Sacred Laws are intended to preserve a strong cultural connection to identity and reciprocity for connectedness. They teach about balance as a way of life. They guide the Indigenous world view, where we see the whole person—physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental as being deeply connected to the land and in relationship to others (i.e., family, clan, and Tribe). This holistic view is an essential aspect of supporting Indigenous peoples’ health and a foundational belief in our world view. This holistic framework illustrates Tribal values and ways of being—respecting Indigenous knowledge, nurturing responsible relationships, and modeling reciprocity and balance. Indigenous people believe “Haa kusteeyi guganeix, Our way of life will heal.”*

**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?

**D. A Tree Goes Through Four Seasons (10 minutes)**

Review the handout, "A Tree Goes Through Four Seasons" with participants.

**A TREE GOES THROUGH FOUR SEASONS**

**SPRING**

A time of new hope, new vision  
 Re-growth of trust  
 New change is in the air, new energy flow is noticeable  
 Experiment with new approaches, old boundaries are changed, expanded, removed  
 Begin to separate old from new, break through thinking emerges  
 Emotionally charged, exciting time

**SUMMER**

New structures & process solidify  
 New patterns of communication solidify  
 New boundaries understood and accepted  
 Life gets solid, the tree takes shape, it knows who it is and what it is, it is a maturing time

**WINTER**

Hard to let go of its shape  
 Starting to feel dead  
 One by one the leaves of success are taken from us by the winds of change, as it starts to fall apart  
 Can't seem to answer these three questions:  
 1. *Who are we?*  
 2. *Why are we?*  
 3. *Where are we going?*

**FALL**

Peak performance  
 Energy cooking  
 Individually - in the "groove"

**Every four years you lose the answers to these three questions.**

Individually – your beliefs, habits, and attitudes that have carried you through are now falling apart. When you can't answer the three questions, you withdraw. You are lost as it gets deeper into the season of winter and those questions in the season of summer where you examine and you look within yourself are growing quieter. You feel the need to be by yourself but do not know why.

Winter is the time and way you sort, heal – don't get sucked into the tendency of codependency. Like each individual tree, you can be in a different season from your mate and the relationship itself can have its own season.

Each season will pass in time. You cannot be in a season for longer unless you resist it. Like the tree when it doesn't resist Winter, each Summer it will take on a new shape, perhaps bigger, more beautiful, and fuller.

Knowing the season you are in – just go back and think about the last time you were really hard on yourself, down on yourself, when even praying is difficult. This would be your winter. The best thing to do when you are in Winter is to get by yourself and examine yourself. It is nature's law – that which is built will turn on itself and destroy itself, returning itself back to the earth. This is how rebirth and renewal occur. Conflict precedes clarity.

Whenever you have a Spiritual experience, you jump into Spring.

**III. Activity (30 minutes)**

This is a mind mapping activity to help participants envision what it is they are seeking; what types of changes do they want to see in themselves? Explain that during this exercise both the left and right sides of the brain are active, and it is intended to be a fun, creative, and insightful activity. You can find guidance and examples for this type of activity by searching for mind mapping on the Web.

To begin the exercise the facilitator will provide an illustration by drawing a circle in the center of the (physical or virtual) whiteboard. Ask the group to choose one idea (e.g., a confident, independent woman or a clean and sober person) and write the idea and a description of the idea in the center of the circle. Then draw a line outside of the circle and begin a brainstorming session with participants. Ask participants to share specific concepts that relate to or would contribute to the idea at the center of the circle. Write these concepts at the ends of the lines extending from the circle. You can create additional branches from the supporting concepts. The diagram will resemble a spider web when the mind mapping activity is complete. Ask participants to reflect on the illustration of their vision of personal change and discuss.

**IV. Talking Circle (60 minutes)**

The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

**V. Closing (10 minutes)**

The facilitator provides a closing reading. You can read "Plant Your Own Garden", invite a participant to read something of their choosing to bring the group to closure, or read a selection from a meditation book or inspirational reading.

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.

**PLANT YOUR OWN GARDEN, DECORATE YOUR OWN SOUL**

After a while you learn the subtle difference  
 Between holding a hand and chaining a soul,  
 And you learn that love doesn't mean leaning  
 And company doesn't mean security,  
 And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts  
 And presents aren't promises,  
 And you begin to accept your defeats  
 With your head up and your eyes open  
 With the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child,  
 And you learn to build all your roads on today,  
 Because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for plans,  
 And futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight.  
 After a while you learn  
 That even sunshine burns if you get too much.  
 So you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul,  
 Instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers.  
 And you learn that you really can endure . . .  
 That you really are strong,  
 And you really do have worth.  
 And you learn and learn . . .  
 With every goodbye you learn.

*Author: Veronica A. Shoffstall*

## Tips/Suggestions

- This lesson focuses on traditional culture and teachings. Apply the cultural content that is meaningful for your Tribe and community.

## Resources

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- Graham, M. [Tribal Trade Co]. (2020, June 19). *What is the medicine wheel? (Medicine wheel teachings 101)* [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7nb4rJ\\_N14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S7nb4rJ_N14)
- Jean, T. (2003, June 1). *365 days of walking the Red Road: The Native American path to leading a spiritual life every day*. Adams Media.
- Merrick, J. S., & Narayan, A. J. (2020). Assessment and screening of positive childhood experiences along with childhood adversity in research, practice, and policy. *Journal of Children and Poverty*, 26:2, 269-281. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10796126.2020.1799338>
- National Institutes of Health. (n.d.). *The Medicine Wheel and the four directions*. U.S. National Library of Medicine. <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/exhibition/healing-ways/medicine-ways/medicine-wheel.html>
- U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). *The Medicine Wheel*. National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/the-medicine-wheel.htm>
- Wooden, L., & Marquis, T. B. (2003). *Wooden Leg: A warrior who fought Custer*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.



## Lesson 7 – Belief Systems



### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is for participants to learn about belief systems and explore their own belief systems. Participants will learn how belief systems create our reality and become the world we live in, regardless of how well the beliefs align with objective reality. Participants will explore the origins of their belief systems and how they were developed and modeled over time. They will recognize whether the beliefs they learned from their families are healthy beliefs that benefit the individual and the family, or whether these beliefs contributed to dysfunctional behaviors and patterns that set the foundation for hurtful family relationships. Participants will be encouraged to ask themselves whether they can change their beliefs, whether it is important to share their beliefs, and how and with whom they should share their beliefs.

### Objectives

- Learn about belief systems, their sources, and how our beliefs influence our lives.
- Examine how beliefs progress through developmental stages in healthy or unhealthy ways.
- Learn how belief systems originate in childhood and how trauma affects belief systems in emotional, physical, mental, spiritual, and cultural development.
- Identify their five most important beliefs or values.
- Explore how messages received from parents, television, school, religion, culture, family, friends, teachers, counselors, and society influence their beliefs.
- Learn about types of dysfunctional family dynamics.

### 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

- Belief Systems
- How Belief Systems Develop
- Identifying the Traumatization and Its Roots
- Healthy Belief Systems
- Our Beliefs
- Influences on Belief Systems
- 5 Types of Dysfunctional Dynamics



## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participants' 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Song

For this lesson, you may play a song of significance to your Tribe and community as a substitute for the opening reading. For example, you may play the Lakota Pilamaya Ye, or Thank You, song.<sup>9</sup>

#### 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

#### F. Read Lesson Purpose

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

<sup>9</sup> Recordings of this song, and many other Native songs, can be accessed on YouTube.

**II. Education Material (110 minutes)**

**A. Introduction to Belief Systems (5 minutes)**

**Read:**

*Beliefs are what a person considers to be true whether verifiable or not. Belief systems are instilled at an early age. Our beliefs were supported by statements or events in our lives, whether personal, philosophical, religious, political, social, or cultural. Understand that everything you experience, whether through hearing, taste, smell, or feeling is turned into a thought, molded into a memory, and set up through the filters of your belief system to be sorted and placed into storage. Beliefs can be determined to be unhealthy and destructive as a result of poor boundaries, abuse, neglect, corruptive lifestyle, alcohol and drug use, domestic violence, and poverty. We want to explore the sources of our beliefs and how and when our beliefs were molded or shaped and by whom.*

**B. Belief Systems (5 minutes)**

**Review the handout** below about belief systems and abuse. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.

### BELIEF SYSTEMS

Belief systems are developed from many different life experiences. These experiences together form the foundation for how we experience life. If we learn many dysfunctional or painful behaviors, these belief systems set the foundation for hurtful family relationships, where abuse may be ignored or treated as normal. These beliefs are then internalized, leading to intergenerational patterns of dysfunctional behaviors.

Dysfunctional belief systems can contribute to the continuation of the cycle of abuse from generation to generation.

2020 Redelk/Yéil Koow Shaawát/Belief sys.

The diagram consists of four overlapping circles arranged in a diamond pattern. Each circle is labeled with a type of abuse or neglect in red, bold, uppercase letters. The top circle is labeled 'SEXUAL ABUSE', the right circle is 'PHYSICAL NEGLECT', the bottom circle is 'EMOTIONAL MALTREATMENT', and the left circle is 'PHYSICAL ABUSE'. All four circles overlap in a central area.

**C. How Belief Systems Develop (10 minutes)**

**Review the handout** below about how healthy and unhealthy belief systems progress through the developmental stages of life. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.

## HOW BELIEF SYSTEMS DEVELOP

In a belief system, mirroring (what you see) behaviors progress and are continued throughout the developmental stages from prenatal to Elder. At each stage, family systems are impacted with healthy or unhealthy learning experiences.

Healthy	Developmental Stage	Unhealthy
Growth	<b>PRENATAL</b>	Failure to thrive
Loving		Anger amongst members
Safe		Don't feel safe
Trust	<b>INFANT</b>	Does not feel trust
Stable	<b>PRESCHOOL</b>	Family members lack trust with each other
Respect	<b>SCHOOL</b>	No boundaries in the home
Shows limits		Rigid Roles
Flexible	<b>ADOLESCENCE</b>	
Free to speak		No freedom to speak
Healthy intimacy	<b>ADULT</b>	Secretive
Privacy		No locks on doors
Sense of self	<b>ELDER</b>	Role in family changes on a day-to-day basis
Knows culture		Denied access to cultural practices

D. Identifying the Traumatization and Its Roots (10 minutes)

Read the handout below about how our belief systems originate in our childhoods and are influenced by our families. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.

## IDENTIFYING THE TRAUMATIZATION AND ITS ROOTS

Identifying how and what you learned from your families during your childhood is an important step in understanding who you are today and why you are the way you are. While growing up, you develop beliefs about being in relationships, being with yourself, self-esteem, self-discipline, parenting, working, and boundaries. Because you develop your belief systems from your families, they are a profound influence.

If you experienced abuse or grew up in an alcoholic family, you were affected emotionally, physically, mentally, spiritually, and culturally. Your recovery begins with the process of looking at how you think about the dysfunction or abuse, how you felt about the abuse, and how you react to it.



Healing comes in seeking a balance of

Thoughts  
Feelings  
Reactions

to the traumatic events.



E. Healthy Belief Systems (10 minutes)

Review the handout below about healthy belief systems. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.

### HEALTHY BELIEF SYSTEMS

A healthy belief system includes balance between cultural pride and awareness, powerful feelings of self-worth and self-love, and a strong supportive family system based on *respect, flexibility, openness, and continued growth*. This type of system is always moving towards a heightened sense of balance and awareness.



*Celebration 2010, Juneau, Alaska*

#### Cultural Dynamics

Recognizing that as a Native, Indigenous person you are part of a larger system



#### Developmental Dynamics (Self)

Recognizing that cultural identity is integral to one's spiritual, emotional, and mental health

**F. Our Beliefs (20 minutes)**

In this activity, we ask participants to identify one or more sources of where they see their own belief systems being influenced, e.g., society, media, teen magazines, and other sources that tell them what they should look like and what they should wear. Or it could be a coach, religious teacher, or counselor who emphasized a value or instilled a belief.

Distribute printed copies of the handout to participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform. Ask participants to write an answer to each question on their handouts. If meeting virtually, participants can voice their answers and the facilitator can type them onscreen. Then discuss participants' responses. You may also discuss with participants how their beliefs influenced their spirituality.

**OUR BELIEFS**

**Where do we get our beliefs/values?**

**Can our beliefs change?**

**Is it important to share our beliefs and values? If yes, with whom and how?**

**It is ok to force our values and beliefs on others? Why or why not?**

**What are your five most important values/beliefs?**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### G. Examining Our Beliefs (15 minutes)

The facilitator reads each statement below and then asks participants if they agree or disagree with the statements. Engage the group in conversation about the statements. The list is for the facilitator only and should not be distributed. However, if meeting virtually, you can display the list using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.

Beliefs

1. Men should be the head of the household.
2. It's okay to punish children by spanking them.
3. Extra-marital relationships are okay.
4. Cruelty to animals is unimportant.
5. Homosexuality/gay lifestyle is wrong.
6. I believe that one race/culture is better than any other.
7. Childcare is a woman's job.
8. I believe that my religious beliefs are the only true beliefs.
9. I believe that violence and/or physical fighting is okay.
10. I believe that a woman's place is in the home.
11. I believe that it is my own business how I raise my children.
12. I believe that showing feelings is a sign of weakness.
13. I believe that it is my right to carry a weapon whenever and wherever I want.
14. I believe that people are generally self-serving and bad.
15. I believe that it is both okay and healthy to drink alcohol and use drugs.
16. I believe that my problems are due directly to the behaviors of others.
17. If people push my buttons, they deserve to be hurt.
18. I do not need to do anything to protect the planet.
19. I do not need the help of others to solve my problems.
20. It is my right to have sex with my mate/significant other whenever I want.

### H. Influences on Belief Systems (20 minutes)

**Distribute** printed copies of the handout below to participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform. Ask participants to complete the charts on their printed handout. Then discuss responses together as a group.

**INFLUENCES ON BELIEF SYSTEMS**

Of the following, what did each of these systems tell me?

Parents	=
Television	=
School	=
Religion	=
Culture	=
Family	=
Friends	=
Counselors	=
Books	=
Teachers	=
Brothers/Sisters	=
Yourself	=
Society	=



How did these systems affect you in the following areas?

SPIRITUALLY	PHYSICALLY	EMOTIONALLY	MENTALLY

**I. Five Types of Dysfunctional Dynamics (15 minutes)**

**Read the handout** below describing 5 types of dysfunctional dynamics. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.

## FIVE TYPES OF DYSFUNCTIONAL DYNAMICS

We may not recognize how the environment we grew up in demonstrated dysfunctional family dynamics. Similar to symptoms of anxiety and depression, the signs may range from mild to severe, and signs can go unnoticed in the everyday lives of dysfunctional families. Here are 5 types of dysfunctional family dynamics:

- 1. The Chronic Conflict Family:** In this type of dysfunctional family, members fight with each other in harmful ways. They'll leave one another physically or emotionally wounded. The tension is bred from toxic parental styles, such as abusive and authoritarian styles. The parents usually will be strict, rigid, and unreasonably harsh with their kids. Fear is a tool commonly used to maintain control, and punishment methods are often abusive mistreatment that can be traumatizing for the individual. Prolonged conflict within the family can damage a child's neurochemistry, which can create chronic stress, anxiety, depression, and an insecure attachment style as they cultivate relationships outside of the household.
- 2. The Pathological Household:** In this type of family, severe psychological, mental health disorders, terminal illness, or substance abuse or drug addiction affect the members everyday lives. One or both parents may suffer from terminal illnesses such as cancer, mental disorders like schizophrenia, personality disorders such as borderline personality disorder, or mood disorders like bipolar disorder. Along with drug addiction problems, one or both parents may also have addictions associated with alcohol or gambling. In a pathological household, the family roles are reversed; the children are more responsible and take care of everyday functions, and the parents are the ones being looked after. The parents' disorders or illnesses can cause children to become preoccupied with tasks they aren't meant to handle until they are more mature. This can cause them to develop social deficiencies, anxiety, and depression over time.
- 3. The Chaotic Household:** In this type of family, the children are often poorly looked after when the parents are too busy, are not present, or do not set clear and consistent rules. The parents do not establish any organization, system, or routine that the whole family can follow, which makes it hard for the children to find any grounding or assurance. Often the older siblings take on the responsibilities the parents have failed to fulfill, and they learn to play the role of the caretakers. Meanwhile, the younger or school-age children in the chaotic household usually have trouble with discipline, concentrating in school, and listening to authority figures.
- 4. The Dominant-Submissive Household:** In this type of family, one parent is the dictator while the other is passively obedient. The dictator parent has no consideration for the wishes or feelings of the other family members. This often causes the other parent to feel depressed, and they usually have a lot of repressed, negative, and angry emotions. Consequently, the whole family faces tension and all the members are extremely unhappy and dissatisfied with their home life. While one parent is controlling and pays little attention to the way that their actions affect the whole family, the rest of the members suffer silently from their choices, showing little open revolt.
- 5. The Emotionally Distant Family:** This may be one of the least obvious dysfunctional family types. On the outside, nothing is loudly or noticeably chaotic. But behind closed doors, there is very little affection shown between the family members. The parents rarely show warmth towards their children, which teaches them to repress their feelings as they get older. This brings about an insecure or nonexistent attachment that can negatively affect the child's identity, self-esteem, and ability to form relationships with others. In this household, communication is rarely open, and the members often choose to deal with their problems alone instead of seeking help.

**Discussion:** What type of dysfunctional family dynamic resonates the most with you? We understand that this is a hard topic to talk about, but we strive to be a space where you can open up to each other and communicate with one another. We encourage you to share your story during the Talking Circle.

### III. Talking Circle (50 minutes)

The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

The facilitator provides a closing reading. A potential reading is the March 15 daily meditation from *A Cherokee Feast of Days: Daily Meditations*, Volume 1 by Joyce Hifler. You may instead invite a participant to read something of their choosing to bring the group to closure or read a selection from a meditation book or inspirational reading.

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

- Breines, J. (2015, August 30). *3 ways your beliefs can shape your reality*. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-love-and-war/201508/3-ways-your-beliefs-can-shape-your-reality>



## Lesson 8 – Levels of Victimization



### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is for participants to learn about the conceptual levels of victimization. Participants will recognize their own victimization and the age in which it first occurred. Participants will learn about three conceptual levels of victimization: 1. The traumatic event itself, which is known as the shattering of assumptions, and the consequences associated with this level: a loss of feeling invulnerable, loss of an orderly world, and loss of a positive self-image; 2. secondary wounding experiences; and 3. the acceptance of the victim label. Participants will engage in a group exercise regarding the third level which reflects the feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, defilement, and betrayal and how these feelings may characterize their view of life.

### Objectives

- Understand that a victim is defined as someone who has suffered from at least one particularly negative, intensely disruptive event and that this can apply to anyone and their traumatic event, as defined by the individual.
- Understand the levels of victimization and how they influence belief systems and often lead to (if untreated) re-victimization.
- Come to recognize the depth of complex trauma.

### 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

- Becoming Aware
- Evening Prayer and Meditation – 12 Questions to Ask Myself

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participants' 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. A recommended reading is "Becoming Aware," provided below.<sup>10</sup> Facilitators may also select their own reading related to the themes of this lesson.

### BECOMING AWARE

When we were born, we could not walk or talk or even focus our eyes. But the ability to do all these things and more was born in us. By continual effort, we still grow and learn and develop our identities. We learned early that we were not a bird and not an animal. And this is where personality begins to question – then,

What am I? Who am I? Why am I here?

Is this an identity crisis? No, it is a belief crisis. Every person has a hard time believing she has a specific reason for being here. Some have such a hard time believing that they go out and demand what others have. They see themselves outside the circle – not believing their own words and beliefs put them where they are. To a Cherokee, status is freedom to move, freedom to achieve honor within oneself, freedom to worship, and freedom to do what is right without ridicule.

They (the Cherokees) are apt in catching the spirit of growth....

#### 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

<sup>10</sup> Source: Hifler, J. S. (1992). *A Cherokee feast of days: Daily meditations, volume 1*. Council Oak Books.

## F. Read Lesson Purpose

Read the lesson purpose at the beginning of each lesson.

## II. Education Material (90 minutes)

### A. Victim Thinking Activity (30 minutes)

Victim thinking reflects the feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, defilement, and betrayal. The facilitator guides participants in an activity to examine victim thinking and explore whether they are suffering from victim thinking and how to counter this thinking. Read the statements and ask participants whether they agree or disagree that each statement characterizes their own view of life. Explain that if they have answered “yes” to ten or more of these questions, they probably are suffering from victim thinking that is hampering their opportunities for personal growth, vocational development, and the satisfaction of loving human relationships.

1. I have to accept bad situations because they are part of life, and I can do nothing to make them better.
2. I don't expect much good to happen in my life.
3. Nobody could ever love me.
4. I am always going to feel sad, angry, depressed, and confused.
5. There are situations at work and at home that I could do something about, but I don't have the motivation to do so.
6. Life overwhelms me, so I prefer to be alone whenever possible.
7. You can't trust anyone except a very few people.
8. I feel I have to be extra good, competent, and attractive in order to compensate for my many defects.
9. I feel guilty for many things, even things that I know are not my fault.
10. I feel I have to explain myself to people so they will understand me. But sometimes I get tired of explaining, conclude it's not worth the effort, and stay alone.
11. I'm often afraid to do something new for fear I will make a mistake.
12. I can't afford to be wrong.
13. I feel that when people look at me, they know right away that I'm different.
14. Sometimes I think that those who died during the traumatic event I experienced were better off than I was. At least they don't have to live with the memories.
15. I am afraid of the future.
16. Most times I think things will never get better. There is not much I can do to make my life better.
17. I can be either a perfectionist or a total slob depending on my mood.
18. I tend to see people either as for me or against me.
19. I feel pressure to go along with others. Even when I don't want to avoid such pressure, I avoid people.
20. I am never going to get over what happened to me.
21. I find myself apologizing for myself to others.
22. I have very few choices in life.

## B. Levels of Victimization (60 minutes)

Discuss victimization and describe three levels of victimization: 1. The traumatic event itself, which is known as the shattering of assumptions and the consequences associated with this level: a loss of a sense of invulnerability, loss of an orderly world, and loss of a positive self-image; 2. secondary wounding experiences; and 3. the acceptance of the victim label.

### SHATTERED ASSUMPTIONS THEORY

Facilitators are encouraged to read social psychology literature on shattered assumptions theory developed by Ronnie Janoff-Bulman. Shattered assumptions theory proposes that experiencing traumatic events can change how victims and survivors view themselves and the world. According to Janoff-Bulman, traumatic life events shatter these core assumptions, and coping involves rebuilding a viable assumptive world.

Current work and research involving the shattered assumptions theory is available via the Web, and facilitators are encouraged to read, "The Glass Is Neither Half Full Nor Empty, It Is Shattered: A Prospective Study of Shattered Assumptions Theory and Psychological Flexibility" by Eric Robert Schuler.

#### Level 1 – The Traumatic Event

A victim is someone who has suffered from at least one particularly negative, intensely disruptive event. The development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is common for those who experienced a traumatic event. This can involve the loss of a sense of invulnerability, an orderly world, and a positive self-image. The victim may experience self-blame and shame that affect their self-esteem and self-worth, and they may experience feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, and powerlessness.

#### Level 2 – Secondary Wounding

Secondary wounding occurs when a response to a disclosure of sexual violence blames, shames, or in any way harms the individual who has disclosed.<sup>11</sup>

Secondary wounding occurs when the people, institutions, caregivers, helping professionals, family, friends, and others to whom the trauma survivor turns to for emotional, legal, financial, medical, or other assistance respond with:

- Disbelief
- Denial
- Discounting/minimizing

Blaming the victim can happen during this level along with stigmatization, survivor's symptoms, and punishment for the victim vs. the offender (e.g., *if you weren't wearing that outfit or hadn't been drinking . . .*).

#### Level 3 – The Acceptance of the Victim Label

Level 3 occurs when the individual internalizes *victim status*. Even though they are no longer in the original traumatic situation, they think and act as if they are still being victimized.

After discussing the levels of victimization, ask participants to brainstorm ways they can be affected because of living with uncertainty and fear (e.g., the individual feels like a child, feels the need to withdraw or isolate, has feelings of rage or self-doubt, or engages in self-destructive behavior or substance abuse).

<sup>11</sup> Whitmore, E. (n.d.). *Responding to disclosures of sexual violence: Identifying, addressing, and preventing secondary wounding* [PowerPoint slides]. Fredericton Sexual Assault Centre. [https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/attachements/secondary\\_wounding\\_presentation\\_-\\_whitmore.pdf](https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/attachements/secondary_wounding_presentation_-_whitmore.pdf)

**III. Talking Circle (70 minutes)**

The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".


**IV. Closing (10 minutes)**

The recommended closing reading for this lesson is "Evening Prayer & Meditation: Twelve Questions to Ask Myself."<sup>12</sup>

**EVENING PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

**Twelve Questions to Ask Myself**

1. Was I resentful?
2. Was I selfish?
3. Was I dishonest?
4. Was I afraid?
5. Do I owe anyone an apology?
6. Was I kind to everyone?
7. Did I offer love to all?
8. Could I have done anything better today?
9. Was I thinking only of myself today?
10. Was I thinking of what I could do for others today?
11. Did I ask the Creator for forgiveness?
12. Did I ask what I could do to make amends?



Facilitators may instead choose to:

- Select a different poem, meditation, or passage relevant to Lesson 8.
- 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.

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from *Alcoholics anonymous big book* (4th ed.). (2002). Alcoholics Anonymous World Services.

## Tips/Suggestions

- We recommend reading *I Can't Get Over It: A Handbook for Trauma Survivors* by Aphrodite Matsakis, PhD, an excellent reference source for this lesson.

## Resources

- *Alcoholics anonymous big book* (4th ed.). (2002). Alcoholics Anonymous World Services.
- Campbell, R., & Raja, S. (1999). Secondary victimization of rape victims: Insights from mental health professionals who treat survivors of violence. *Violence and Victims* 14, 261-75. 10.1891/0886-6708.14.3.261. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/12695910\\_Secondary\\_Victimization\\_of\\_Rape\\_Victims\\_Insights\\_From\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Professionals\\_Who\\_Treat\\_Survivors\\_of\\_Violence](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/12695910_Secondary_Victimization_of_Rape_Victims_Insights_From_Mental_Health_Professionals_Who_Treat_Survivors_of_Violence)
- Hifler, J. S. (1992). *A Cherokee feast of days: Daily meditations, volume 1*. Council Oak Books.
- Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered assumptions: Towards a new psychology of trauma*. Free Press.
- Matsakis, A. T. (1996). *I can't get over it: A handbook for trauma survivors*. New Harbinger Publications, Inc: Oakland, CA.
- Schuler, E. R. (2013). *The glass is neither half full nor empty, it is shattered: A prospective study of shattered assumptions theory and psychological flexibility*. [https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc407756/m2/1/high\\_res\\_d/thesis.pdf](https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc407756/m2/1/high_res_d/thesis.pdf)
- Whitmore, E. (n.d.). *Responding to disclosures of sexual violence: Identifying, addressing, and preventing secondary wounding* [PowerPoint slides]. Fredericton Sexual Assault Centre. [https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/attachements/secondary\\_wounding\\_presentation\\_-\\_whitmore.pdf](https://www.casw-acts.ca/files/attachements/secondary_wounding_presentation_-_whitmore.pdf)



# Lesson 9 – Triggers



## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is for participants to understand how our brain and body store knowledge of everything that has ever happened to us, including past trauma. During traumatic and secondary wounding experiences, our senses tend to be particularly alert. These experiences can make a greater impact on the brain and can be stored in our memory and in our bodies more vividly and more deeply than ordinary events; traumatic incidents can also be stored in the subconscious as a protective mechanism. Participants will learn that when something arises in the present that reminds them of a past event, whether they are consciously aware of it or not, they can feel as though they are re-experiencing the traumatic event. If you are unaware of, or do not have the coping skills to handle what is happening, you can feel out of control and overwhelmed. Participants will come to understand that triggers are present day events that trigger those emotions from a past trauma. Participants will learn that responses to triggers are not purely emotional and will understand how the two branches of the autonomic nervous system, the parasympathetic (calm and relaxed) and the sympathetic (fight, flight, or freeze) are engaged; what happens when the sympathetic is activated during a trigger; and the hormones stimulated during triggering events, including the stress hormone cortisol.

## Objectives

- Understand what a triggering event is and be able to begin the process of identifying their triggers.
- Learn about the autonomic nervous system, and its relationship to the fight, flight, or freeze response.
- Learn about skills to bring oneself out of survival mode and connect with the cerebral cortex (executive functioning) part of the brain to effectively respond to triggers and experience success with healing.
- Understand the importance of giving themselves grace and compassion.
- Participate in a brainstorming activity to identify triggers.

## Materials

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

## Handouts

- Simple Ways to Relieve Stress
- Trigger Formula Chart

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

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

#### B. Smudging

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. You may read "Snow Dog – A Tlingit Prayer" by Dr. Cyrus Peck, Sr. or select your own reading related to the themes of this lesson.

### SNOW DOG: A Tlingit Prayer

*By Dr. Cyrus Peck, Sr.*

Our great Spirit Above  
 Our Defender  
 Sacred Spirit  
 Today we look to you  
 in prayer.  
 Today we are standing  
 before you.  
 Look upon us.  
 We want to be strong  
 People.  
 Only from the Great Spirit  
 do we receive strength.  
 We pray for those that are  
 In sorrow today.

They are mourning the  
 loss of their relative,  
 their friend.  
 Give them strength,  
 Bless them Great Spirit.  
 Be with our children  
 Wherever they are.  
 If they are traveling  
 and are far away from home,  
 bless them that they may  
 reach their destination  
 Safely.

Our Great Tlingit Nation  
 is scattered all over the Country.  
 Reach out, Great Spirit,  
 and guide us as we work  
 upon projects and our  
 daily work.  
 Whatever we are working on,  
 Bless it.  
 Thank you for life itself.  
 Thank you for the food.  
 May strength be in the  
 food you have provided.

Continued on next page

**SNOW DOG: A Tlingit Prayer (continued)**

Great Spirit, we pray  
for you today.  
Walk with us.  
Those that we have left behind at  
home, reach out  
and Bless them.  
Thank you for their lives  
and thank you for our lives.  
Thank you for their lives  
and thank you for our lives.

Bless the sick and those  
that are struggling for life  
Through illness,  
wherever they are.  
Give them strength.  
Give them strength.  
Give them strength.  
Send them strength from you,  
Great Spirit, because  
you are the one who can  
give them strength.

We believe, Great Spirit,  
that you still hear our  
prayer and this prayer  
will be answered.  
We believe that you  
have heard our prayers,  
Great Spirit  
Make us strong.  
For this is our prayer.  
Let it be.  
Let it be.  
Let it be.

**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 they have any questions about that lesson.

**F. Read Lesson Purpose**

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

**II. Education Material (60 minutes)**

Before leading the education material part of the session, review the lesson resources to develop your knowledge of the content and prepare to deliver the content to best serve the needs of your participants.

**A. Triggers (25 minutes)**

**Read** material about triggers:

*The memory cells in our brain store knowledge of everything that has ever happened to us. During traumatic and secondary wounding experiences, your senses tend to be particularly alert. Those experiences make a greater impact on the brain and are stored in your memory more vividly and more deeply than ordinary events. Traumatic incidents and the emotions associated with them are stored in our subconscious memory as a protective mechanism.*

*When a stimulus arises in the present that reminds you of a past event, you experience the feelings associated with the past event. The body is also picking up on the emotions associated with the past incident. These are called triggers—present day events that trigger those emotions from the past trauma. Having triggers or reacting to them does not mean you're crazy. You've got to know your triggers, because when you are unaware of what you're feeling and why you're feeling it, you're going to do things that may not be good for you.*

**Read** material about the body's response:

*When you respond to a trigger, your response is not purely emotional, it is physiological; it activates the autonomic nervous system, which has two branches: the parasympathetic (rest and digest) and the sympathetic (fight, flight, or freeze). The stress hormone cortisol is activated. So, being a trauma survivor means you have survived a life-or-death emergency state. This emergency state may have lasted a few minutes, months, or years. This state causes the body to fight, flight, or freeze. The response is when your adrenal glands secrete hormones that cause the body to want to stand and fight or run like hell; it can also cause people to freeze up. In the present, one of the main problems you may have is that part of your brain does not know the difference between a real threat and one that is stored in the body.*

*One of the worst parts of being a trauma survivor is that events can trigger adrenal arousal and activate your long-term memory; memories of the traumatic event and secondary wounding experiences also tend to be activated. This activation can result in increased nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety, rage reactions, and other PTSD symptoms.*

*You may not consciously associate a certain person, object, or place with the traumatic event, but that wonderful complex brain of yours does remember and makes the association and suddenly you are living in the emotional climate of the traumatic event. Now, if these kinds of reactions are not painful and distressing enough, imagine that you're unaware of your triggers.*

*Knowing your triggers is just as important as staying in control of them. You can be bewildered or even frightened by your response when suddenly, without even knowing why, you've very quickly become angry, numb, disoriented, paranoid, scared, or defensive. You may think/ask yourself "am I falling apart?" or "I'm losing my mind." You might feel hyperactive; find you're doing self-destructive behaviors like using substances or drinking, self-harming, or becoming aggressive toward others. Whether you respond by becoming hyper or by shutting down, by attacking others or attacking yourself, whatever it is, you're not thinking clearly, and if you're unaware of those triggers/trigger situations, it can be scary and overwhelming. It is especially dangerous to be in this emergency state or in that state where you feel threatened for prolonged periods because of what is happening to your body biochemically. Your adrenal glands were not made to handle prolonged stress. They can be worn down by overuse. You can have flight/flight/freeze reactions to triggers too frequently. Over the long haul, it damages your body—not to mention your emotional and spiritual health.*

## B. Coping With Triggers (20 minutes)

**Read** material about how to cope with triggers:

*Your reactions to your triggers can provoke negative reactions from others. It's important to realize that you are entitled to your responses to the trigger. You may even turn to a substance to comfort you. Others may label your strong reactions as overreaction, saying, "You should be over it by now." But you are not over it, and there is no reason why you should be. Triggers can take many forms, some of which may seem trivial. Whatever your triggers, whether it's the color of a car, which may seem irrelevant to others, they are highly relevant to you—not only is the color permanently imprinted on your mind, but it is imprinted on your emotions as well.*

*Trigger situations are threatening because, consciously or subconsciously, they bring up memories of times when you were powerless and vulnerable. You need time to calm yourself. You may really need to be alone to think and practice some self-soothing skills. If you can find people in your life that can be understanding, and accept you and your needs, then you can manage the reaction. You can learn to comfort yourself and cope with your triggers.*

*If you have survived the trigger without hurting yourself, harming someone else, or regressing into some dysfunctional state, this is quite an achievement. Just because you felt anxious or uncomfortable does not mean you failed. Don't expect yourself to cope with a potent trigger without any anxiety, grief, or depression. This is asking too much of yourself. Your goal is to be able to endure the trigger situation so that you can go on with your life, not to wipe out all your emotional reactions. Know your limits, respect them, and try not to put yourself in situations that push those limits too far.*

*We are going to explore strategies that will allow us to handle our triggers and thrive in the face of them for the rest of the session. First, we'll look at things you can do to soothe and relieve stress, and then we'll inventory triggers to help us become more aware of when we might need to soothe.*

**C. 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.** You may develop a handout from the following to guide the activity. If meeting virtually, display the handout using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform. When asking participants to share the ways they deal with stress, you can add them to the handout in real time.

**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. Activity (30 minutes)**

**Distribute** printed copies of the chart below to participants. If meeting virtually, email the handout to participants in advance of the meeting. You can also display the chart onscreen during the virtual session while you guide participants through the activity as if you were in the room with them.

Ask participants to identify at least one trigger, write it on the chart, and enter their responses to the trigger, the memory or traumatic event from which the trigger originated, a coping skill to address the trigger, and who they might share their awareness of the trigger with. Participants can also write about the benefits of letting this person know. After participants have completed their charts, discuss responses together as a group.

**Trigger Chart With Example**

TRIGGER	REACTION/ RESPONSE	TRAUMATIC MEMORY/ EVENT	COPING SKILL	SHARE/DISCLOSE
Green Car	Heart racing, leg shaking, fearful, crying.	I was assaulted by 2 men in a green car.	Paced breathing, self-soothing, grounding.	Explain to my date that I am triggered by the green car that passed us on the street.

**IV. Talking Circle (70 minutes)**

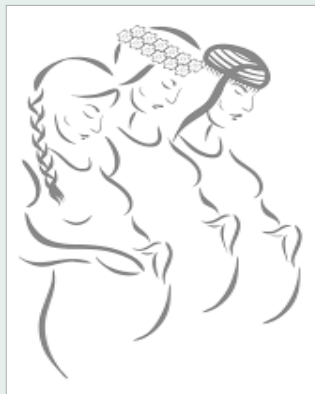
The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

**V. Closing (10 minutes)**

The facilitator reads or asks a participant to read the passage below as a closing reading.

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



"God grant me the serenity  
To accept the people, I cannot change.  
The courage to change the ONE I can,  
and the wisdom to know it's me"

Think about it. The prettiest woman in the world can have bitterness in her heart. And the most highly favored woman at your job, may be unable to have children. And the richest woman you know — she's got the car, the house, the clothes — might be lonely.

Someone will always be prettier. They will always be smarter.

Their house will be bigger. They will drive a better car.

Their children will have better schooling. And their husband will fix more things around the house. So, let it go, and love you and your circumstances.

And the Word says if I have not loved, I am nothing. So, Again, Love You.

Love who you are right now and let Creator be your barometer. Mirror Creator.

Look in the mirror in the morning and see how much of Creator you see.

He's the only standard, even when you come up short; he will not leave you or forsake you.

Smile and may Creator continue to bless you.

To the world you might be one person, but to one person you just might be the world.

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

- Stress the importance of being aware of one's triggers because staying in control during a triggering episode is the goal.
- Encourage participants to show support for each other by expressing sympathy and encouragement.

## Resources

- Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US). (2014). Trauma-informed care in behavioral health services. Rockville (MD): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US). (Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 57.) Chapter 3, Understanding the Impact of Trauma. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/>
- Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2014). *Parenting a child who has experienced trauma*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubpdfs/child-trauma.pdf>
- Cleveland Clinic. (2022). *Autonomic nervous system*. Health Library. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/23273-autonomic-nervous-system>
- Guy-Evans, O. (2021, April 28). *Autonomic nervous system: Definition, divisions and function*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/autonomic-nervous-system.html>
- Najavits, L. M. (2002). *Seeking safety: A treatment manual for PTSD and substance abuse*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Waxenbaum, J. A., Reddy, V., & Varacallo, M. [Updated 2021, July 29]. *Anatomy, autonomic nervous system*. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2022 Jan-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK539845/>
- Wright, S. A. (2021, November 8). *How to identify and overcome trauma triggers*. PsychCentral. <https://psychcentral.com/health/trauma-triggers>



# Lesson 10 – Love, Relationships, and Intimacy



## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide insights on the complexities of love, relationships, and intimacy. Participants will learn about codependency, signs of codependence, strategies for breaking the codependency cycle, and the process of recovery. Participants will learn about three types of relationships: codependent, independent, and interdependent. Participants will study the topic of intimacy, learn how to take healthy risks around intimacy, and come to understand how couples who remain happy over long periods of time keep their love alive. Finally, participants will learn the meaning of personal power as described.

## Objectives

- Learn about characteristics and behaviors seen in codependent relationships.
- Complete a questionnaire to explore their ability to be intimate.
- Learn about how healthy couples keep love alive.

## Materials

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

*If the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the women is intact, so too is that of the family, community, and society.*

—Indigenous Proverb

## Handouts

- Codependency
- Codependent Relationships
- Personal Balance
- Intimacy Questionnaire
- How to Recognize a Good Woman
- Intimacy and Calculated Risks
- Sexual Intimacy and Love—Keeping Love Alive

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

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

#### B. Smudging

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. Facilitators may also select their own reading related to the themes of this lesson.

#### 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 they have 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. Codependency (10 minutes)

**Read the handout** below describing codependency. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.

## CODEPENDENCY

Codependency is a concept developed within the chemically dependent family. It originates in the family of origin. When a child is raised in a family where there is no one around that they can depend on, they really don't ever learn that they can depend on themselves. Some become very dependable and get into a relationship with someone that needs to depend on them, and some of us begin to depend on externals—and those externals eventually become our addictions.

The symptoms of codependence are like polarization—our reactions are extremes to people and things going on around us and in us. We might be under responsible, or we might be over responsible; we might be perfectionistic or too loose and procrastinating. We experience wide emotion swings. Many of the symptoms of codependence match the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. People who have experienced trauma tend to have personality collapse, fears, anxiety, agitation responses, and sexual and social inhibitions. Codependence exhibits these same symptoms. In fact, codependency comes from the same types of effects as post-traumatic stress disorder.

Some other characteristics of codependence includes hyper-vigilance, stress-related illness, and enmeshed or low functioning relationships. Codependency is usually seen in terms of relationships. In fact, codependency is not about relationships with other people—it's more about an absence of relationship with self.

Most of the symptoms of codependency exhibit themselves in relationships with other people, but their relationship disease is still more about the dis"ease" in our relationship with ourselves. It stems from the low functioning relationship with our families when we were young. Codependents do tend to mistake enmeshment as intimacy and that is the polarization of their reactivity. They tend to not just get into enmeshed relationships, but sometime struggle out of those relationships. Usually in the struggle we remain more enmeshed than we were before we started the struggle! But once in a while we break away from a relationship and we experience independence. Some people remain in the independence posture which is also codependency. That person stays out of relationships because they can't take care of themselves; they lose too much of themselves in relationships with other people.

The other posture is counter-dependence, where we defy and sabotage the systems and the relationship that we are in. All

three of these role positions are positions of codependence.

There really are not secrets in families, there is only denial. In talking about the secrets, we start to heal from the effect the secret has in our life. Our shame is exposed to light, and it no longer has us. In families where there is alcoholism, sexual abuse, parental discord, or dishonesty going on, we know we are not supposed to talk about these things. So, recovery is where we learn to talk about them and learn to share. We also learn that these things are not about who we were, but about what was going on around us.

It is also important to note that we get as controlled by the reason we kept the secret as the secret itself. And that's a part we often miss in recovery. Often, we kept the secret in the fear that it would hurt someone.

Codependency is the child's reaction to family dysfunction. Codependency is really about a lot of things. It's a cultural, personal, and family issue. Codependence is about that lack of self-intimacy. This is a symptom of the codependence.

It's hard to understand boundaries until we understand enmeshment. Many of us were beaten or neglected off of the path of becoming ourselves, which is the bottom line of our spirituality. But many of us got enmeshed on someone else's path. We got scripted to live out a life for them. It's hard to develop boundaries when we are enmeshed in someone else's reality. You can't set limits until you know yourself, and once you know yourself, you have your limits and it's very hard to violate that. Most of the hurt that is experienced from life is from the inside that taps into a person's own emptiness. When we know ourselves, love ourselves, and hang around gentle people, our boundaries are less rigid; they are flexible, they are gentle, but we know what they are, and we know what we can handle. Addiction and abuse are examples of not having a sense of boundaries or having our boundaries violated.

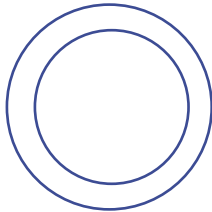
People do not recover from codependency by leaving a relationship, but sometimes we have to have some separation or detachment from a relationship so that we can do our recovery. People in relationships with people in recovery also need support because of all the changes and their fear. They sometimes feel a sense of isolation while their partner is doing their recovery work. In relationships we need to do our work separately for a while before we try to come together and do it.

Source: Pia Mellody

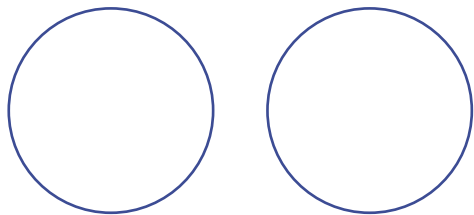
**B. Codependent Relationships (15 minutes)**

**Present** the diagrams and annotations illustrating 3 different types of relationships: 1) codependent; 2) independent; and 3) interdependent. Explain the features of each. Note that these 3 relationship patterns are not exclusive to couples.

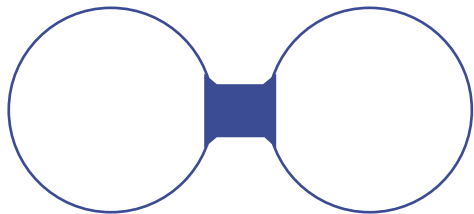
**CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS**



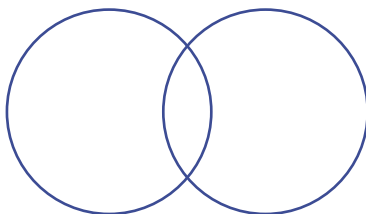
**Codependent relationships** are characterized by a lack of boundaries. Usually, one person is more controlling of the other and can dictate where they go, who they see, and how long they are allowed to be away from them. This is a relationship that is enmeshed; you often can't tell them apart (e.g., 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-ciable). They no longer have anything in common and are leading separate lives. They've grown apart. This is referred to as an independent relationship.



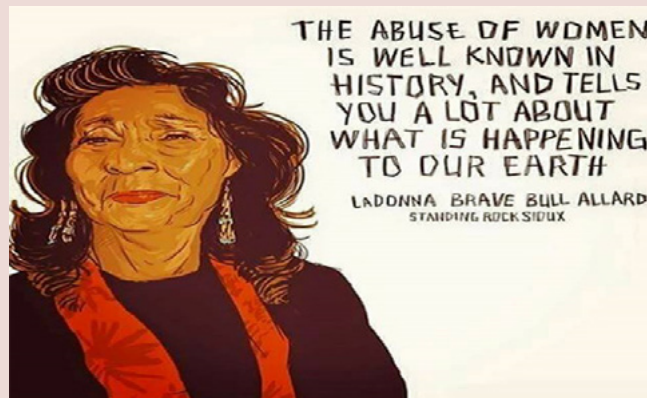
A couple in a codependent or independent relationship might seek couples counseling. However, this may not be effective because one or the other might not feel safe enough to be truthful. Instead, a counselor could seek to pull the codependent relationship apart and provide individual counseling, helping 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.

### C. Personal Balance (10 minutes)

**Read the quote and passage** about personal balance below. Discuss and encourage participants to provide feedback about the material. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.



#### PERSONAL BALANCE

Personal balance, says the Native person, is a matter of self-restraint, steadiness, and consistency. We like to think we have some of each. We want to believe we know a good thing when we see it—and because we can see it, we can possess it as well. Balance means living squarely, or with truth. It means seeing that what we believe and what we talk about dictate what we get out of life. If we shortchange, we get shortchanged. If we whip and beat and scheme to get the better of someone, time will equalize it. No one really gets away with anything. We love to win, but if deceit comes in, so do all the factors of balance. A smokescreen blows away with the slightest change in pressure. We get what we give—good or bad.

#### Read:

*In fact, codependence is not about relationships with other people—it is more about an absence of a relationship with oneself. It's an emptiness of our soul. When we lack identity, that emptiness is often filled with pain and fear. We focus on something external to avoid noticing our own pains and fears. That is why it makes sense to get into a relationship with an addict, so we can focus on the addict. And some of us will do that with social causes, our children, work, or something else.*

### D. Intimacy (15 minutes)

Share a handout on the subject of intimacy and review the handout with participants. The handout should address types of intimacy, such as experiential, emotional, intellectual, and sexual intimacy, and the reasons why people may fear intimacy. Websites with information about intimacy are provided in the lesson resources below. The facilitator reads or asks participants to read the meaning of each type and pauses to briefly ask whether participants have experienced this type of intimacy in their relationships and if they would like to share their example.

**E. Intimacy Questionnaire (20 minutes)**

**Distribute** printed copies of the handout below to participants.<sup>13</sup> If meeting virtually, send the form to participants in advance of the session by email and display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform. Ask participants to complete the form. Then discuss responses together as a group.

<b>INTIMACY</b>					
1. I often feel alienated from other people, as if I'm from another planet.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
2. Most of my relationships just don't work.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
3. I don't have many friends.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
4. I'm okay with my friends, but I just can't work things out with a lover.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
5. I think I'm really meant to be alone.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
6. I'm not sure I really deserve to be loved.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
7. I don't know what love is.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
8. I think people are going to leave me.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
9. I test people a lot.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
10. It's hard for me to be nurtured or to nurture someone else.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
11. I'm clingy with people I'm close to. I'm afraid to be alone.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
12. I'm scared of making a commitment. When people get too close, I panic.	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
13. I have a hard time saying, "no."	ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER

Continued on next page

<sup>13</sup> Excerpt from: Davis, L. (1990). *The courage to heal workbook: For women and men survivors of child sexual abuse*. New York: Harper.

**INTIMACY (continued)**

- |   |        |         |           |        |       |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|--------|-------|
| 14. People take advantage of me in relationships.                     | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 15. I get involved with people who are inappropriate or inaccessible. | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 16. I'm struggling a lot with my partner.                             | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 17. I've had relationships with people who remind me of my abuser.    | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 18. Sometimes I think my partner is my abuser.                        | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 19. Sexual abuse is really creating problems in my relationships.     | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |

**F. How to Recognize a Good Woman (10 minutes)**

**Read** or ask a participant to read the handout below. Ask participants if they have responses to the reading. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform.

**HOW TO RECOGNIZE A GOOD WOMAN**

A Good Woman is proud. She respects herself and others. She is aware of who she is. She neither seeks definition from the person she is with, nor does she expect them to read her mind. She is quite capable of articulating her needs.

A good woman is hopeful. She is strong enough to make all her dreams come true. She knows love; therefore, she gives love. She recognizes that her love has great value and must be reciprocated. If her love is taken for granted, it soon disappears.

A good woman has a dash of inspiration and a dabble of endurance. She knows that she will at times have to inspire others to reach the potential God gave them.

A good woman knows her past, understands her present and grows toward the future.

A good woman knows God. She knows that with God the world is her playground, but without God she will be played with.

A good woman does not live in fear of the future because of her past. Instead, she understands that her life experiences are merely lessons meant to bring her closer to self-knowledge and unconditional self-love.



## G. Intimacy and Calculated Risks (15 minutes)

**Read** or ask a participant to read the handout below about taking calculated risks to reach a deeper level of intimacy. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform. Ask participants if they have responses to the content.

### INTIMACY

As you heal, you will change, and your loved ones will be challenged to change along with you if you are to create healthy, meaningful relationships. This is often stressful, but if both of you are committed to growing personally, you will be more likely to see changes as positive and to welcome—or at least tolerate—them.

#### Calculated Risks

Learning to be intimate isn't comfortable or easy. Becoming intimate means peeling back the layers of protection to let someone in.

Intimacy is experienced in the moment as part of a changing, fluid relationship. Learning to be intimate is a slow process involving mistakes, small successes, and backsliding.

To break through to a deeper level of intimacy, you need to take calculated risks. A calculated risk is different from a blind leap. A blind leap is when you shut your eyes, leap forward and hope everything will work out magically. You start an affair with a married man, positive he'll leave his wife. You get pregnant, hoping the baby will save a faltering relationship. You tell a friend your deepest secrets a week after you've met.

Calculated risks are different. With a calculated risk, you weigh your chances and choices, and step out onto the ice only when you're relatively sure it's solid. With intimacy nothing is 100 percent sure, but with forethought and a responsive partner, you maximize your chances for communication, increased closeness, and satisfaction.

#### Learning to Trust

Survivors tend to see trust as an absolute, either not trusting at all or trusting completely. You may bounce between the two, not trusting until you are so desperate for contact that you throw your trust at the first likely target. Since most people can't handle that kind of desperation, you end up disappointed or abandoned, thus confirming your original fears – that people aren't trustworthy, that you aren't lovable, that love isn't worth it.

Before you can trust anyone else, you have to trust yourself. If you know you can take care of yourself, you won't need to blindly fling your trust out in the hope that someone will take care of you.

Remember, trust accrues over time. It's earned!

## INTIMACY – PAGE TWO

### Experiment with Trust

As you come to trust yourself, you build a foundation for trusting someone else. You can always go back to not trusting if you want to, but at least give it a try.

1. Ask your partner to make dinner for you on a night you're going to be late.
2. Trust someone in your talking circle to hug you in a nonsexual way.
3. Call a friend when you're feeling sad and ask if she'll spend a little time with you.
4. Ask someone to go to a movie with you.

If the experiment fails and you are let down, try to analyze what happened.

1. Whom did I pick to trust?
2. How long did I know the person?
3. Did we have good communication?
4. What kind of thing did I trust the person with?
5. Did I explain what I was doing, letting them know it was very important to me?
6. Did I make my expectations clear?
7. Were there elements in the interchange that paralleled my original abuse?

### Giving and Receiving

There are two sides to intimacy: giving and receiving. You may have a hard time with one or with both. The way to learn either is to practice. If you have been unable to give, start by giving someone what's easiest for you—perhaps a compliment or a favorite food. As time goes on, work up to giving things that are harder. You need to work toward being able to give people what they need, when they need it.

Receiving feels wonderful once you get used to it. But first you must acknowledge how scary it is to be open. If, as a child, you were left to take care of yourself or there were strings attached to getting what you needed, you learned that nurturing was either unavailable or unsafe. But now, receiving doesn't have to mean owing something back.

In healthy relationships, there is a balance to giving and receiving. If you've always leaned heavily one way, you will need to focus more on the other aspect, but eventually, as you feel safer, both giving and receiving will develop a relaxed rhythm.

## H. Sexual Intimacy and Love—Keeping Love Alive (10 minutes)<sup>14</sup>

**Read** or ask a participant to read the handout below. If meeting in person, you may provide printed copies of the handout for participants. If meeting virtually, display using the screen sharing feature of the meeting platform. Ask participants if they have responses to the content.

### SEXUAL INTIMACY AND LOVE—KEEPING LOVE ALIVE

Couples who remain happily in love over long periods of time more consistently exhibit these behaviors:

1. They tend to express love verbally. This simply means saying “I love you” or some equivalent (in contrast to that attitude best summarized by “What do you mean, do I love you? I married you, didn’t I!”). Words can nurture feelings and keep love strong and in the forefront of the relationship.
2. They tend to be physically affectionate. This includes handholding, hugging, kissing, cuddling, and comforting — with a cup of tea, a pillow, or a woolly blanket.
3. They tend to express their love sexually. Sexual intimacy is an important vehicle of contact and expression. Sex remains vital for them long after the excitement of novelty has passed. This does not mean that they regard sex as the most significant aspect of their relationship. They are far more likely to regard their connection at the level of soul as the core of their relationship.
4. They express their appreciation and admiration. Happy couples talk about what they like, enjoy, and admire in each other. As a result, they feel visible, appreciated, valued.
5. They participate in mutual self-disclosure. This is a willingness to share more of themselves and more of their inner lives with each other than with any other person. They share thoughts, feelings, hopes, dreams, aspirations; hurt, anger, longing, and memories of painful or embarrassing experiences.
6. They offer each other an emotional support system. They are there for each other in times of illness, difficulty, hardship, and crisis. They are best friends to each other. They are generally helpful, nurturing, and devoted to each other’s interests and well-being.
7. They express love materially. They express love with gifts (big or small) or tasks performed to lighten the burden of the partner’s life, such as sharing work or doing more than agreed-upon chores.
8. They accept demands or put up with shortcomings. Demands and shortcomings are part of every happy relationship. So are the benevolence and grace with which we respond to them. Each knows he or she is not perfect and does not demand perfection of the other. They are clear that the partner’s virtues outweigh the shortcomings, and they choose to enjoy the positive rather than drown the relationship in a preoccupation with the negatives. This does not mean they do not ask for changes in behavior they find undesirable.
9. They create time to be alone together. This time is exclusively devoted to themselves. Enjoying and nurturing their relationship rank very high among their priorities: they understand that love requires attention and leisure. Such couples tend to regard their relationship as more interesting, more exciting, more fulfilling than any other aspect of social existence. They are clearly not looking for excuses to escape from each other.

<sup>14</sup> Adapted from Sternberg, R. J., & Barnes, M. L. (Eds.). (1988). *The psychology of love*. Yale University Press.

### III. Talking Circle (45 minutes)

The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations."

### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

The facilitator reads or asks a participant to read the quote as a closing reading.

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.

Be very careful if you make a woman cry,  
because God counts her tears.  
The woman came out of a man's rib.  
Not from his feet to be walked on.  
Not from his head to be superior,  
but from his side to be equal.  
Under his arm to be protected,  
and next to the heart to be loved.

### Tips/Suggestions

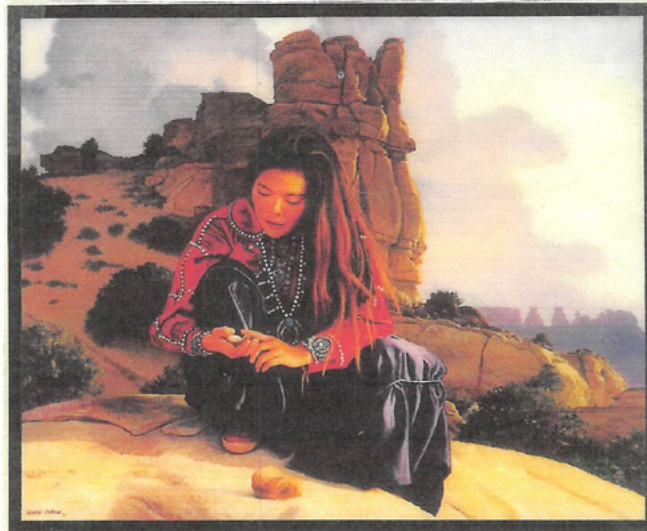
- If you're in need of an activity to break the ice or lighten the mood when discussing personal relationships, you can ask participants to share what qualities make a potential romantic partner a "perfect 10" in their view. This is a light fun activity to get participants to laugh with each other.
- For additional material for this session, you can review material on trust by Dr. Brené Brown, a research professor at the University of Houston, and material by Sharon Wegscheider-Cruse on codependency. See resources below.

### Resources

- Brené Brown. (2022). <https://brenebrown.com/>
- Brown, B. (2021, November 2021). Brené on the anatomy of trust. [Audio podcast episode]. In *Unlocking us with Brené Brown podcast*. <https://brenebrown.com/podcast/the-anatomy-of-trust/>
- Brown, B. (2018). *Braving: The seven elements of trust*. <http://bonner.pbworks.com/f/Feedback%20and%20Trust.pdf>
- Cusido, C. (2022, August 18). How to nourish different types of intimacy in your relationship. *PsychCentral*. <https://psychcentral.com/relationships/nourishing-the-different-types-of-intimacy-in-your-relationship>
- GoodTherapy. (2019, May 14). Intimacy. *GoodTherapy Blog*. <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/intimacy>
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# Lesson 11 – Family Systems: Changing the Things We Can



## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is for participants to learn and understand the differences between three separate types of family systems: unbalanced, balanced, and interdependent. Participants will examine characteristics of each system as well as recognizing the purpose of triangles in families, birth order in families, open and closed boundaries, messages, and roles that are created by the unbalanced system. Participants will explore Erik Erikson’s eight stages of psychosocial development and the developmental tasks required throughout the individual’s life, from birth to death. Participants will identify traits of a healthy family and discuss the Southeast Traditional Tribal Values, “Our Way of Life” as a healthy foundation for healing and direction in life.

## Objectives

- Identify three types of family systems and recognize the characteristics of each.
- Learn about Erik Erikson’s eight stages of psychosocial development.
- Identify the traits of a healthy family.

## Materials

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

## Handouts

- May You Have Peace
- Developmental Stages; Erik Erikson
- Active Relaxation
- Signs of a Healthy Family
- Healthy Family Traits
- Southeast Traditional Tribal Values

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

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

#### B. Smudging

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

#### C. Opening Reading

**Read** or ask a participant to read the blessing below entitled "May You Have Peace." Facilitators may also select their own reading related to the themes of this lesson.

May you be peaceful  
May you be happy  
May your heart remain open  
May you know the beauty of your own true nature  
May you be healed  
In your healing, may you  
Heal others

#### 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

#### F. Read Lesson Purpose

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

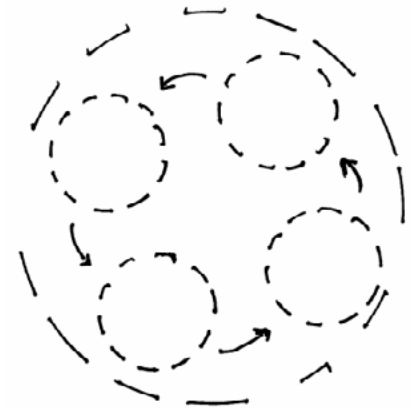
**II. Education Material (60 minutes)**

**A. Diagram of Two Family Systems**

Begin by reviewing diagrams illustrating balanced and unbalanced family systems. Explain the systems' features and characteristics and encourage participants to identify the system they grew up in and the system they are living in now. Talk about patterns and how these predictable patterns emerge to help maintain the family's equilibrium and provide clues to family members about how they should function. Discuss open and closed boundaries and how messages are rarely if ever clear or obvious, yet they give power, induce guilt, and control or limit behaviors.

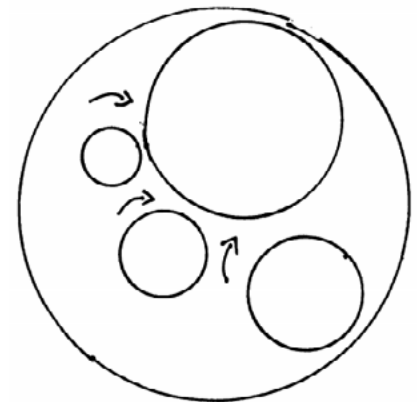
**Open/Balanced System**

- The circles comprised of dashes illustrate a balanced or open family system.
- Open system: gives and receives resources to the "outside". Lets others see "inside" the system.
- There is equal distribution of resources over time, flexible to meeting needs in times of crisis.
- Roles are not stagnant.
- The system rules are: TALK, FEEL, TRUST to help maintain the open, fluid system.
- Everyone has opportunity to grow and take up space.



**Closed/Unbalanced System**

- The solid circles illustrate an unbalanced or closed system.
- Closed System: Doesn't let the outside see what is really going on, based on manipulation and secrets.
- One person "takes up the most resources".
- Roles are stuck and trying to divert from your rule is "not okay".
- No one learns to meet their own needs.
- The system rules are DON'T TALK, DON'T FEEL, DON'T TRUST.
- When the little bubble leaves the system, they will look for relationships similar to the one they came from.
- How can you continue to grow and take up space if you are in a system where one person takes up most of the space?
- Control is crucial to the bubble: "I can/should control everyone's emotions."
- Can create compulsivity: "helping becomes the addiction." [codependency]
- "I don't need anything."
- Problems asking for help
- Do not believe others can or will be able to understand or meet their needs
- Minimization of feelings



Review by asking the following discussion questions:

- Which family system is going to have the following rules: It's ok to TALK, FEEL, TRUST? It's a way of helping to maintain an open, fluid system.
- Which family system doesn't let the outside see what is really going on?
- Which family system has the opportunity to grow and take up space?
- Which system is based on manipulation and secrets?
- Which family system has a tendency for the minimization of feelings?
- In which system are the roles not stagnant?
- What are some "terms" for each of these two-family systems?

(2001, C. Morgaine, Ph.D.)

Encourage group participants to examine and reflect on which system they grew up in. When participants explain that they feel like they grew up in a blending of both systems, let them know that this could be because their parents or they themselves know which is the dysfunctional or unbalanced system and want to do something better but are still struggling with how to be an open, balanced, and healthy system. They are a combination of both as they struggle to evolve.

Discuss the **"Problem"**—the person taking up the most space (often someone with illness or addiction) and who depends on others to meet their needs.

**B. Interdependent Family System**

Examine another family system, the interdependent system. This system is often the family system that is akin to the Native or Indigenous way and can be explained with healthy interdependence as being the core of the extended family.

Native and Indigenous family systems tend to be interdependent systems where:

- Healthy interdependence is the core of the extended family. It does not foster dependence, nor does it stifle independence. Rather, it is a system in which everyone contributes in the same way without expectations of reciprocity.
- For example, I give my cousin a ride to the store; while at the store, my cousin buys some items for our grandmother. Our grandmother is home watching my brother's children, who are planning to wash my car when I return home. No one person is paying back another, and yet the support and help keep recycling throughout the family.
- A lot of support is given through self-talk and stories.



**C. Triangles in Families**

Provide an explanation of the concept of Triangles in Families:

*A triangle is any three-way relationship. Instead of Person A dealing with Person B directly, triangles are used to pull Person C in to help deal with the anxiety of dealing directly with Person B. There are three roles in a triangle: persecutor, victim, and rescuer. For example, Mom and Dad get into a fight. Mom doesn't want to address Dad directly, so she talks to the oldest child about tensions in the marriage. The oldest child then begins to have increased conflict with Dad. Dad is the persecutor, mom is the victim, and the child is the rescuer. A triangled relationship is when the communication between two people that once occurred directly breaks down. The bottom line of a triangle is drawn as a third person is brought in, the third point of the triangle. This can happen with a substance as well. For example, one person needs a substance such as alcohol to cope with the pain they experience in dealing directly with Person A. In order to have direct communication, they need the aid of a substance.*

Ask participants to describe whether they have experienced triangles in their family of origin and in their current families.

**D. The Cycle of Life**

**Review** Erik Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development, using the handout below. Help participants to recognize the developmental stages and tasks their children or grandchildren are experiencing as well as their own tasks. Stress that each is a task that the human individual is to complete; what does it look like if the individual is successful or unsuccessful? Explain to participants that understanding the stages and tasks will help them have realistic expectations for their children and better support their development.

THE CYCLE OF LIFE		
Stages of Development by Erik Erikson		
AGE	HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT	UNHEALTHY DEVELOPMENT
	<b>Trust</b>	<b>Mistrust</b>
<b>1st Year</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need TLC and body contact</li> <li>▪ People are good and trustworthy</li> <li>▪ World is a good place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Family breakup or parental rejection</li> <li>▪ World is not safe</li> <li>▪ Withdrawal in later life</li> <li>▪ Unable to trust and develop close relationships</li> </ul>
	<b>Autonomy</b>	<b>Shame/Doubt</b>
<b>1-2 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I love this world and all it offers</li> <li>▪ Exploration/Independence</li> <li>▪ Become your own being; separate from parent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Over controlled by parents</li> <li>▪ Shame on you or bad boy/bad girl frequently</li> <li>▪ Fearful or ashamed of self in later life</li> </ul>
	<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Guilt</b>
<b>3-7 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Active imagination</li> <li>▪ Role play and pretend</li> <li>▪ Test boundaries between imagination and reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Told don't be silly and grow up</li> <li>▪ Made to feel foolish for using imagination</li> <li>▪ Develop unreasonable fears and guilt in later life</li> <li>▪ May live in fantasy and daydream in later life</li> </ul>
	<b>Accomplishment</b>	<b>Low Self-Esteem</b>
<b>8-11 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feel good for something and good at something</li> <li>▪ Need to receive praise and recognition for accomplishments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overly critical parents</li> <li>▪ Feel no good and lack self-confidence</li> <li>▪ Low self-esteem in later life</li> </ul>

## THE CYCLE OF LIFE (PAGE 2)

### Stages of Development by Eric Erikson

AGE	HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT	UNHEALTHY DEVELOPMENT
	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Inferiority</b>
<b>12-18 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to belong, to be somebody</li> <li>▪ Need to get attention and praise for things done well</li> <li>▪ Develop answers to questions like, "Who am I?" and "Where am I going?"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack self-worth</li> <li>▪ Low self-esteem</li> <li>▪ Become good at being bad</li> <li>▪ Attracts attention inappropriately</li> <li>▪ Later life problems may be depression, suicide attempts, addictions</li> </ul>
	<b>Intimacy</b>	<b>Isolation</b>
<b>19-30 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Share ideas with friends</li> <li>▪ Openly shares innermost thoughts and feelings</li> <li>▪ Not worried about what others think of you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Coldness, inability to share thoughts and feelings</li> <li>▪ Unable to form and maintain close relationships</li> <li>▪ Unreasonable fears of openness and disclosure</li> </ul>
	<b>Generativity</b>	<b>Stagnation</b>
<b>30-40 Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unselfish giving/sharing</li> <li>▪ Give to and guide others</li> <li>▪ Not looking for what's in it for me</li> <li>▪ Service to others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-centered/seeking</li> <li>▪ Take from others</li> <li>▪ What's in it for me</li> <li>▪ Overly materialistic</li> </ul>
	<b>Integrity</b>	<b>Despair</b>
<b>Rest of Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mentally healthy adult</li> <li>▪ Break away from parents and relate to them on an adult level</li> <li>▪ Sees order and worth in the world</li> <li>▪ Have sense of own values, rules, and code of life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fear and hopelessness</li> <li>▪ Judgmental, prejudiced</li> <li>▪ Can't trust others</li> <li>▪ Feels world is a bad place</li> <li>▪ May lack good values and conscience</li> </ul>

**E. Signs of a Healthy Family**

The facilitator ends the lesson on an upbeat note by exploring characteristics and traits of a healthy family. Review the handout below with participants. You may print and distribute if desired.

**SIGNS OF A HEALTHY FAMILY**



**A healthy family:**

- Members communicate their needs to other members in a safe, sensitive, and supportive environment.
- Teaches and learns from the children.
- Has mutual respect for each individual member.
- Has healthy boundaries.
- Has flexibility of roles between generations within the family unit.
- Uses “crisis” for the growth of its members.
- Initiates and maintains growth of relationships both inside and outside of the family.

**Each family member has:**

- The ability to negotiate with other members of the family without put downs.
- The ability to say yes or no without the price tag of rejection.
- The ability to ask without demanding.
- Confidence in the stability of the relationship.
- The ability to show feelings of all kinds without fear of losing the relationship.
- The ability to have specific relationships with individuals in the family.
- Each family member has the ability to celebrate, have fun, and play.

**F. Traits of a Healthy Family by Dolores Curran<sup>15</sup>**

Dolores Curran, author of *Traits of a Healthy Family*, developed 15 traits of a healthy family. No family possesses all of these traits, but the handout can be used as guidelines for understanding healthy traits in families. Review the handout below with participants. You may print and distribute if desired.

**TRAITS OF A HEALTHY FAMILY BY DOLORES CURRAN**

The healthy family . . .

1. Communicates and listens.
2. Affirms and supports one another.
3. Teaches respect for others.
4. Develops a sense of trust.
5. Has a sense of play and humor.
6. Exhibits a sense of shared responsibility.
7. Teaches a sense of right and wrong.
8. Has a strong sense of family in which rituals and traditions abound.
9. Has a balance of interaction among members.
10. Has a shared religious core.
11. Respects the privacy of one another.
12. Values service to others.
13. Fosters family table time and conversation.
14. Shares leisure time.
15. Admits to and seeks help with problems.



<sup>15</sup> Source: Curran, D. (1984). *Traits of a healthy family: Fifteen traits commonly found in healthy families by those who work with them*. New York: Ballantine Books.

## G. Active Relaxation<sup>16</sup>

End the session by leading an active relaxation exercise to ground and re-center participants.

### ACTIVE RELAXATION

Most people are not aware that when they are upset or agitated, one or more of their muscle groups are tense, and their breathing is rapid and shallow. If we can learn to control our muscle tension and our breathing, we can teach our bodies to stay relatively calm and relaxed even in upsetting situations. The following is a procedure for achieving relaxation quickly. By practicing every day, within two to three weeks, you will be able to relax your body by simply saying, "Relax," to yourself in real life situations with your child and in other stressful situations as well.

- Get comfortable in your chair. Place your arms on the arms of the chair. Close your eyes and keep them closed throughout the entire exercise.
- Become aware of the various muscle groups in your body (e.g., hands and arms; face, neck, and shoulders; chest and stomach; hips, legs, and feet).
- Bend your arms at the elbow. Then, make a tight fist with both hands while tightening biceps and forearms. Hold for 5 seconds. Pay attention to the tension. Then relax. Pay attention to the relaxation.
- Tense your entire face and shoulders, tightly shut your eyes, and wrinkle your forehead, pull the corners of your mouth towards your ears, tighten your neck, and hunch your shoulders. Hold for 5 seconds. Pay attention to the tension. Relax. Pay attention to the relaxation.
- Take in a deep breath and arch your back. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Now relax. Take in another deep breath and press out your stomach. Hold...and relax.
- Raise your feet off the floor while keeping your knees straight. Pull your feet and toes back toward your face and tighten the muscles in your shins. Hold...and relax. Now, curl your toes down toward the floor, tighten your calves, thighs and buttocks and hold...and relax.
- Scan each muscle group in your mind and relax any tense muscles.
- Now, become aware of your breathing. Slow your breathing down as you breathe in and out, in and out.
- With your next deep breath, count slowly from 1 to 5 as you breathe in and count from 6 to 10 as you breathe out. Your stomach should expand and deflate with each breath.
- Repeat this deep, slow, breathing...in and out...in and out... Stop when you are feeling deeply relaxed.
- Say the word, "Relax" to yourself approximately 20 times every time you exhale.
- Now, gradually let your breathing return to normal and open your eyes.

<sup>16</sup> Sources: Center for Sexual Assault & Traumatic Stress. (n.d.). *Coping Skills*. [https://depts.washington.edu/hcsats/PDF/TF-%20CBT/pages/cognitive\\_coping.html](https://depts.washington.edu/hcsats/PDF/TF-%20CBT/pages/cognitive_coping.html). Center for Sexual Assault & Traumatic Stress. (n.d.). *Active Relaxation*. <https://depts.washington.edu/uwhatc/PDF/TF-%20CBT/pages/4%20Coping%20Skills/Relaxation/Active%20Relaxation.pdf>

### III. Talking Circle (65 minutes)

The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson and discuss issues that affect parenting, such as:

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Violence in the home
- Financial problems
- Health problems
- Stress
- Relationship problems
- Child abuse
- History of abuse issues as a child
- Lack of healthy support system

After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

In closing the facilitator reviews the Southeast Traditional Tribal Values of the Tlingit & Haida (or those of your Tribe) and asks participants, "What traditional Tribal values are important to you and your family and why?"

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

- Bopp, J., Bopp, M., Brown, L., Lane, P., & Lucas, P. (1989). *The sacred tree*. Wilmot, WI: Lotus Light.
- Cherry, K. (2022, August 3). *Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development: A closer look at the eight psychosocial stages*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/erik-eriksons-stages-of-psychosocial-development-2795740>
- Cross, T. L., Bazron, B. J., Dennis, K. W., & Isaacs, M. R. (1988). *Towards a culturally competent system of care: A monograph on effective services for minority children who are severely emotionally disturbed*. Washington, DC: CASSP Technical Assistance Center.
- Curran, D. (1984). *Traits of a healthy family: Fifteen traits commonly found in healthy families by those who work with them*. New York: Ballantine Books.

- Dettlaff, A. J., & Boyd R. (2020). Racial disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system: Why do they exist, and what can be done to address them? *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 692(1):253-274. Doi: 10.1177/0002716220980329
- Erik Erikson's 8 Stages of Psychosocial Development Summary Chart. <https://web.cortland.edu/andersmd/erik/sum.html>
- Erik Erikson's Psycho-Social Stages of Development. <https://www.brookings.k12.sd.us/cms/lib/SD01816867/Centricity/Domain/369/Erikson.psychosocial.stages.pdf>
- Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Stages. <https://www.trschools.k12.wi.us/faculty/CMUJKANOVIC/Erikson%20theory%20of%20development%20worksheet.pdf>
- Orenstein, G. A., & Lewis, L. (2022). Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. [Updated 2021 Nov 14]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK556096/>
- Richardson, R. W. (1995). *Family ties that bind: A self-help guide to change through family of origin therapy*. Bellingham, Wash: Self-Counsel.
- Sahota, P. C., Contreras, A., Kastelic, S., Cross-Hemmer, A., Ybarra Black, A., Cross, T., Personius, D. J., Pecora, P. J., Kinswa-Gaiser, P., & Around Him, D. (2022). Positive Indian Parenting: A Unique Collaborative Study in the Age of COVID-19. *American Indian and Alaska native mental health research (Online)*, 29(2), 104–125. <https://doi.org/10.5820/aian.2902.2022.104>





# Lesson 12 – Guest Speaker



## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this group’s lesson is for participants to have the opportunity to hear from others who can testify to their own survival. Whether that is their road to sobriety and recovery, overcoming trauma, or reclaiming their Native identity, it is about having a transformative experience. It usually involves a personal healing journey into self-examination and self-discovery. The speakers can present on their personal experiences, Native culture, family culture, education, life experiences, or a combination. It is what excites the guest speaker about coming into the light—their journey of healing, learning, struggling, growing, and becoming.

## Objectives

- Learn from the guest speaker about Phase II content, the speaker’s healing journey, and other relevant topics.

## 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

- Introduction to Guest Speaker

## Lesson Guidance

### I. Welcome (10 minutes)

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

#### A. Attendance

**Call out participants’ 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

If meeting in person, the facilitator asks a participant to smudge the other participants. If meeting virtually, ask participants to grab their smudge kits and smudge themselves while the lesson is beginning. While participants smudge one another, the facilitator may drum and sing a Native song. Every few lessons, the facilitator should ask participants to explain the purpose and benefits of smudging.

## C. Opening Reading

**Deliver the opening reading** or ask a participant to read. We recommend saying a prayer or asking the guest speaker if they have a recommended reading they would like to deliver for this session.

## 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 they have any questions about that lesson.

## F. Read Lesson Purpose

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

# II. Education Material (100 minutes)

## Planning

You will need to arrange for the guest speaker's participation in advance. We recommend finding the speaker within your community—someone who knows your culture, history, language, and values. Or you may wish to find a speaker who is an expert on particular topics covered in Phase II. It is beneficial for the speaker to have knowledge of the material covered in the Yéil Koowú Shaawát program. The facilitator can ask group members who they'd like to have as a guest speaker. You can also ask your colleagues for recommendations. After the program has operated for some time, past graduates can be invited to return as guest speakers who can share their stories of change, growth, and healing.

Inform your guest speaker about the program to ensure they understand the context and audience for their presentation. Make sure that preparations are made for the speaker's transportation, technology needs, and materials. Ask the speaker if they are open to answering questions from participants. You may also wish to ask for the speaker's permission to record the session for sharing with group members who could not attend the session. Consider if your program budget will allow for providing an honorarium and gifts for the speaker and covering their travel costs.

## Guest Speaker

Introduce and provide support for the guest speaker. You may wish to prepare a handout about the speaker for distributing to participants.

### III. Talking Circle (60 minutes)

The facilitator may say a prayer, burn sage, smudge, and sing a song to transition from the education component to readying for the Talking Circle.

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 may also share reactions to any of the material discussed in the lesson. After participants share, they pass the eagle feather to the next person and say, "All my relations".

### IV. Closing (10 minutes)

Provide a closing reading or invite a participant to read something of their choosing to bring the group to closure. You can use a selection from a meditation book or inspirational reading. Thank everyone for coming to group.

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

- Suggestions for guest speakers include program alumni, Tribal Elders, dance groups, and singers/singing groups.

### Resources

- Hogan, S., McCracken, K., & Eiding, A. (2019, January 14). How and when to invite Indigenous speakers to the classroom. *Active History*. <https://activehistory.ca/2019/01/how-and-when-to-invite-indigenous-speakers-to-the-classroom/>



## Lesson 13 – Graduation



### Lesson Purpose

Lesson 13 is a graduation ceremony to celebrate participants' completion of Phase II. As with all Yéil Koowú Shaawát graduation events, 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 and their guests for supporting these women, mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers with their courageous journey in the completion of Phase II. Graduates participate in a traditional ceremony to begin the evening's celebrations. Certificates of completion are awarded after the ceremony. Interview questions may be distributed at the end of the event to collect feedback on Phase II of the program. Participants are encouraged to continue to participate in the next round of the group.

### Objectives

- Participants and their invited guests share a graduation ceremony and dinner to honor the accomplishment of completing Phase II and, for some participants, the completion of all three phases of the program.
- The families of the participants become part of the celebrating and congratulating participants on their achievement.
- Participants are invited to continue with the next phase of the group.

### Materials

- Eagle Feather
- Smudging Materials: Sage, Abalone Shell, and Lighter
- 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 II Certificates 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 II.)
- Graduation Gifts (e.g., Smudging Kit)
- Event space (e.g., a hall or small auditorium)

## Lesson Guidance

### Graduation Ceremony

The facilitator plans and hosts a graduation ceremony to celebrate the completion of Phase II. 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 an example.

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 are critical parts 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.

The completion of Phase II should be celebrated and recognized as an important accomplishment, but for many participants, this group represents a community and an ongoing journey. Participants should know that they are welcome to continue as members of the group and participate in the next cycle. Repeating the group has had benefits for many women, and experienced group members can provide strength and support to new members and bring their experiences and resilience to group meetings.

#### A. Planning the Event

To plan the event, the facilitator:

- A. Schedules a date and time for the event.
- B. Reserves event space, such as a hall or small auditorium, with a stage or space for a lectern and space for tables where participants and their guests can eat a meal.
- C. Arranges to have a meal served at the event.
- D. Informs participants of the date, time, and location of the event and that they may invite two guests to attend.
- E. Coordinates to have a drummer and for Tribal Elders and spiritual leaders to attend the event.
- F. Assigns an individual to lead a Ribbon Ceremony or other traditional ceremony at the event.
- G. Prepares Certificates of Completion for each participant.
- H. Prepares event space with tables for participants and their guests to sit and eat.

#### B. Welcoming

The facilitator welcomes participants and guests to the Graduation Ceremony. The facilitator sets 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. If preferred, the facilitator can lead a group smudging of all attendees. During this time the facilitator, guests, or community leaders can drum and sing traditional songs.

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

Participants join in a Ribbon Ceremony or a ceremony of your choice that connects the event with the cultural, traditional, and spiritual.

Participants in the Ribbon Ceremony are asked to come to the stage or front of the room and stand in a circle. The facilitator or designated ceremony leader informs attendees that the ribbon colors of red, black, white, and yellow represent the 4 Directions of the Medicine Wheel.

**Read** the following:

1. *We invite our ancestors or those that have gone on before us into the circle and ask for their protection and guidance.*
2. *We want those who were significant in our lives, whether living or departed, to share this experience with us.*
3. *We wish to create a bond with them and with each other, so that we can work together.*
4. *We wish to create an atmosphere of sharing, safety, and trust in the circle as we continue to do this work.*

Leads the ceremony by **reading**:

*I would like each of you to think of two persons who were influential in your life who you would like to be with you during this journey. I will start by calling my mother. I will explain how she was there for me and 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 who will share about two persons who were influential in their life. Then we will tie our two ribbons together. And the next person in the circle will share their two individuals and 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

After the 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 II. The goal is for participants to feel a sense of pride and achievement for the completion of the Phase. The facilitator invites participants to continue with the group, shares the start date for the next group cycle, and explains how to sign up. If interested, you may distribute questions at the end of the event to collect feedback on Phase II of the program. The responses can be collected through an online form, emailed to the facilitator, or collected as hard copies at a later date.



## 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. For this reason, the graduation 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.
- In the need to host 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. For example, each participant can have time to speak, perhaps to share the meaning behind a personal item of special importance to them.
- Encourage participants to invite guests to graduation. The presence of participants' family members will add to the warmth and spirituality of the event. The more the merrier!



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## Appendix: Sample Materials and Handouts



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# SYLLABUS

Yéil Koowú Shaawát

## PHASE II: Personal and Family Development

- Lesson 1      **Orientation & Introduction to Phase II:** Reviewing group guidelines. Culturally responsive activity to encourage group bonding. The importance of creating a sacred space for healing.
- Lesson 2      **Genograms (Week 1):** Using genograms as a tool to understand trauma and family history. Exploring what has been passed down to us.  
  
                   **Genograms (Week 2):** Completing and sharing genograms. Processing uncovered feelings.
- Lesson 3      **Frequency, Severity, and Impact of Abuse, Beginning with Childhood:** Exploring trauma, abuse, and intergenerational family patterns. Discussing the dysfunctional patterns learned through the work on the genogram.
- Lesson 4      **Film:** Viewing film to explore intergenerational trauma and other complex emotions (select film relatable to your Tribe and culture, looking at issues of grief, loss, and intergenerational grief/trauma).
- Lesson 5      **Loss and Grief, Stages of Healing:** Grieving those things lost to the victim: childhood, stable upbringing, adequate parenting. The stages of healing; grief work.
- Lesson 6      **Native Spirituality as a Way of Life:** Introducing the Native American philosophy, viewpoint, and way of life. Participants will learn about Tribal values and explore the question, "Are my behaviors consistent with the values I hold?"
- Lesson 7      **Belief Systems:** How do belief systems contribute to violence and abusive behaviors? What is the source of those beliefs? Group activity.
- Lesson 8      **Levels of Victimization:** The process of becoming a victim. What is secondary wounding? Victim thinking and ways to prevent victimization—changing the story.
- Lesson 9      **Triggers:** Why am I acting this way? How trauma is stored in the body, memory cells, types of triggers, symptoms, recognizing our own triggers, group exercise, completing trigger chart. Self-care, positive self-talk.
- Lesson 10     **Love, Relationships, and Intimacy:** Love and relationships are complex. Codependency. Learning how to take healthy risks around intimacy.
- Lesson 11     **Family Systems:** Characteristics of the family, changing the things we can. Open and closed family systems. Native family systems.
- Lesson 12     **Guest Speaker(s)**
- Lesson 13     **Graduation from Phase II**

## Lesson 1

### THE CIRCLE

*By Amalia Montreal*

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 the facilitator 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.

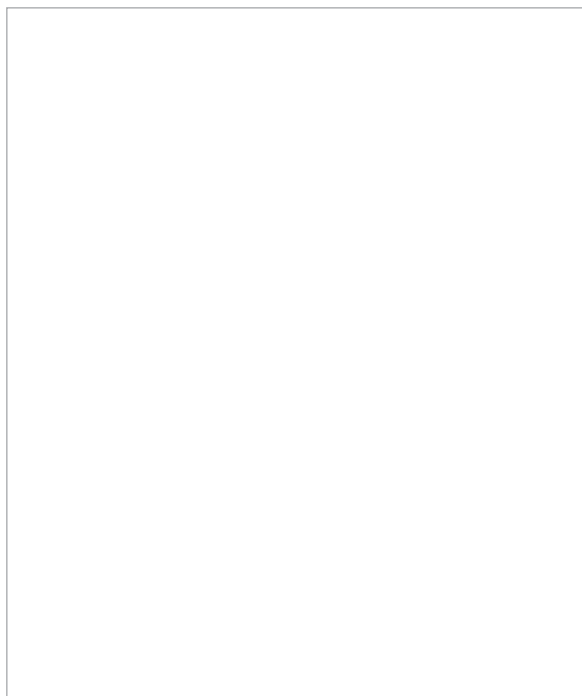
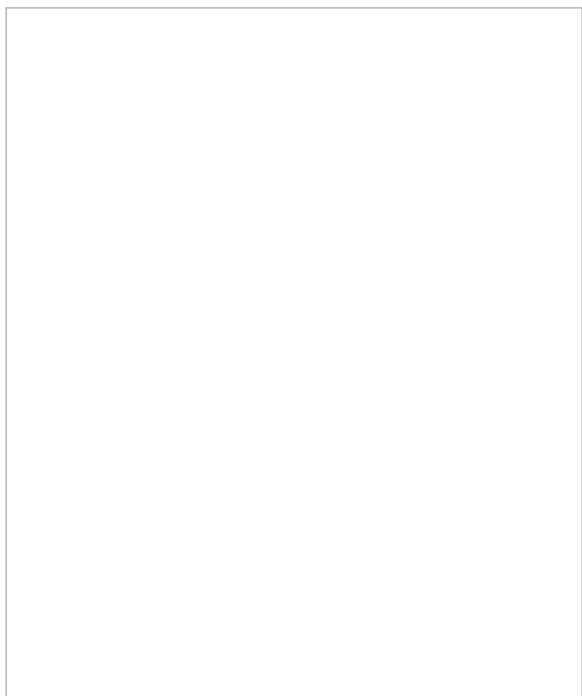
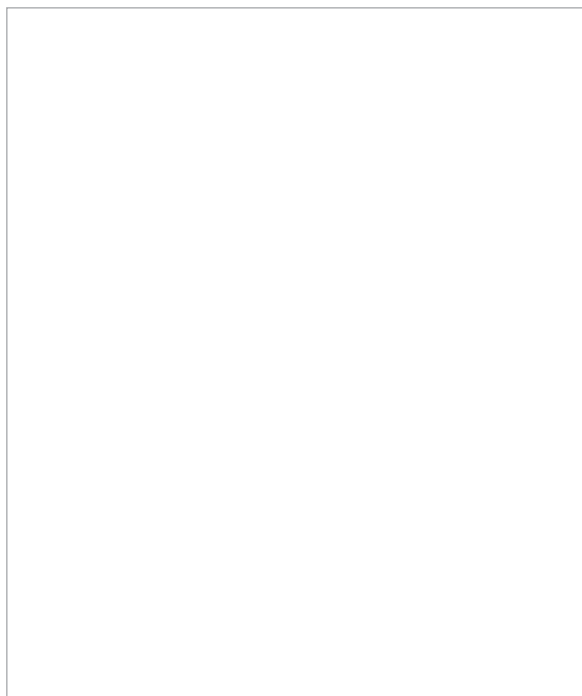
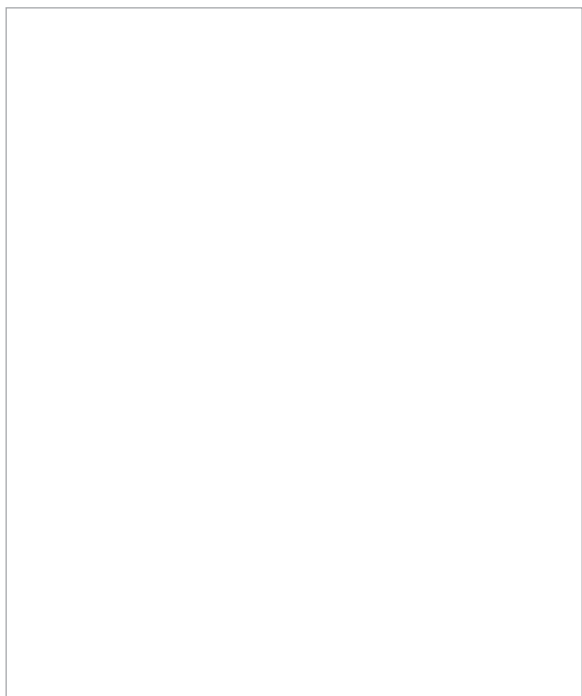
At a group level, you will have a hard time growing if you become distracted or hold grudges against one another. You can talk down to one another or you can build one another up.

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

## **EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY**



## TALKING CIRCLE PRAYER

*By Walter Ray Denny, Chippewa, Rocky Boy's Reservation*

Creator, Heavenly Father, you who are known by so many names,  
I ask you to be a part of our lives today.

Whisper to us your wisdom, be in our presence here.  
If we become doubtful and afraid, help us.

It is true that for some of us, we live our lives with a lot of trial and error.  
I ask for your guidance in this way.

A Chippewa Elder once wrote that there are many dwellings.  
Each dwelling we create ourselves.

The house of anger, the house of despair,  
The house of self-pity, the house of indifference,  
The house of negativity.

The house of positivity,  
The house of hope, the house of joy, the house of peace,  
The house of cooperation, the house of giving.

Each of these houses we visit every day.  
We can stay in any house as long as we wish.  
We create the dwelling, we stay in the dwelling, we leave when we wish.

We can create new rooms, new houses.  
This becomes our world until we leave for another.

Creator, no one can determine which dwelling we choose to enter.  
No one has the power to do so, only us.

Let each of us choose wisely today.


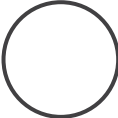



## Lesson 2

### THE PAST

The reason we must dredge up the past, whether or not it causes discomfort, lies in the understanding that as long as we deny the past, as long as we pretend that the hurts are not there, the longer it will take to be healed.

Let this circle represent what we can do together, we cannot do alone, what you hear here, stays here, here, here.



Basic Genogram Symbols	
	Male
	Female
	Deceased
	Residential School
	Physical abuse



## QUESTIONS TO ASSIST WITH YOUR GENOGRAM ANALYSIS

*Developed by Amalia Monreal*

1. Give the names and ages of all family members you can remember for the last four generations.
2. Where did these family members live? In what city/town/village? Where do these family members live now? For what reason did they move?
3. Who passed away in the family? When? Of what? When were they born? Married? Separated? Divorced?
4. Was subsistence a big part of your parents' or grandparents' lives?
5. Which family members used alcohol or drugs? Which family members have been arrested? Had mental health problems? Died by suicide? Or had other serious problems?
6. What patterns are repeated, such as alcohol or drug use, mental health challenges, domestic/family violence, or other behaviors?
7. Are there themes or cycles that seem to repeat in your family intergenerationally?
8. How did people get along in your family? Who was close to whom?
9. Do you currently have children in foster care?

If you were removed from your biological family, please mark this in the genogram. For example, if you lived in multiple foster homes, use the symbol for foster care **X 4** (however many times you were in foster placement).

If you have questions, please call for the facilitator or co-facilitator.

## PRAYER FOR TODAY AND EVERY DAY

Owner and Creator of All Things

I Stand here on Mother Earth asking for Guidance and Help

Because I Believe in You.

As I look Around Me and Into the Heavens

I see All of Your Wonderful Work around Me.

No one but the Great Holy One could do these Things.

As I look at Myself again, I See

Your Wonderful work in Me as a Human.

To be able to Think and Talk is a Miracle Itself.

Give me a Long Life and Good Health to be with my People a Long Time.

Help Me get along with All People.

Help Me that I may say Good Things about People instead of Bad Things.

Thank You for Everything.

Lesson 3

SYSTEM DYNAMICS OF THE ALCOHOLIC FAMILY

ROLE	MOTIVATING FEELING	IDENTIFYING SYMPTOMS	PAYOFF FOR INDIVIDUAL	PAYOFF FOR FAMILY	POSSIBLE PRICE
DEPENDENT	Shame	Chemical use	Relief of pain	None	Addiction
ENABLER	Anger	Powerlessness	Importance; self-righteousness	Responsibility	Illness; "martyrdom"
HERO	Inadequacy; guilt	Overachievement	Attention (positive)	Self-worth	Compulsive drive
SCAPEGOAT	Hurt	Delinquency	Attention (negative)	Focus away from Dependent	Self-destruction; addiction
LOST CHILD	Loneliness	Solitariness; shyness	Escape	Relief	Social isolation
MASCOT	Fear	Clowning; hyperactivity	Attention (amused)	Fun	Immaturity; emotional illness

WHAT IS ABUSE?

Abuse takes many different forms. It can be physical, emotional, or sexual. It can happen every day or every once in a while. It can occur in public places, like a store or a park, or in private places, like your home or your car. It can leave you with bruises and bumps on your body or leave you with an emotional or physical hurt or injury inside that no one can see. It can happen when you are a young child or when you are an adult. The person being abusive could be your spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, child, or parent.

Power and control are the core of domestic violence. No one deserves to be beaten no matter what they have done. It is the abuser who is responsible for his or her violent behavior, not the person being hurt. You cannot stop the abuser from being abusive, but you can keep yourself safe. Understanding the information here can help.

The continuums below show how relatively minor incidents escalate into serious violence. The intensity and frequency of violence always increases for emotional, physical, and sexual abuse.

Emotional Abuse Continuum

Jokes	Ignoring feelings	Jealous	Isolation	Convinces you that you're worthless, crazy	Suicide
Insults	Name Calling		Public Humiliation	Threats	Homicide

Physical Abuse Continuum

Scratch	Slap	Push	Hit	Kick	Thrown	Choke	Beat	Burn	Suicide
Deny physical needs		Bite	Shove	Throw objects		Use weapons			Homicide

Sexual Abuse Continuum

Sexual jokes	Ignore sexual needs	Control contraceptives	Force sex with self or others	Suicide	
Uncomfortable tickling	Sexual putdowns	Humiliation	Affairs Rape	Sex after beating	Homicide



## THE 12 STEPS—A WAY OUT

### Common Feelings and Behaviors of Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA)

1. We have feelings of low self-esteem as a result of being criticized. We perpetuate these parental messages by judging ourselves and others harshly. We try to cover up our poor opinions of ourselves by being perfectionistic, controlling, contemptuous, and gossipy.
2. We tend to isolate ourselves out of fear and to feel uneasy around other people, especially authority figures.
3. We are desperate for love and approval and will do anything to make people like us. Not wanting to hurt others, we remain “loyal” in situations and relationships even when evidence indicates our loyalty is undeserved.
4. We are intimidated by angry people and personal criticism. This causes us to feel inadequate and insecure.
5. We continue to attract emotionally unavailable people with addictive personalities.
6. We live life as victims, blaming others for our circumstances, and are attracted to other victims as friends and lovers. We confuse love with pity and tend to “love” people we believe we can pity and rescue.
7. We are either super-responsible or super-irresponsible. We take responsibility for solving others’ problems or expect others to be responsible for solving ours. This enables us to avoid being responsible for our own lives and choices.
8. We feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves or act in our own best interest. We give in to others’ needs and opinions instead of taking care of ourselves.
9. We deny, minimize, or repress our feelings as a result of our traumatic childhoods. We are unaware of the impact that our inability to identify and express our feelings has had on our adult lives.
10. We are dependent personalities who are so terrified of rejection or abandonment that we tend to stay in situations or relationships that are harmful to us. Our fears and dependency stop us from ending unfulfilling relationships and prevent us from entering into fulfilling ones.
11. Denial, repression, isolation, control, shame, and inappropriate guilt are legacies from our family of origin. As a result of these symptoms, we feel hopeless and helpless.
12. We have difficulty with intimacy, security, trust, and commitment in our relationships. Lacking clearly defined personal limits and boundaries, we become enmeshed in our partners’ needs and emotions.
13. We tend to procrastinate and have difficulty following projects through from beginning to end.
14. We have a strong need to be in control. We overreact to change over which we have no control.

*This is a description not an indictment.*

# BOUNDARIES

Which boundaries were violated in your childhood?

Do you own a sense of self, or "I am a person"?

What roles did you take on in childhood?

baby  
 scapegoat  
 little mother  
 little wife  
 the "brain"  
 the slow learner  
 daddy's girl  
 the spoiled child  
 the whiner  
 crazy  
 the message girl

clown  
 dummy  
 juvenile delinquent  
 the responsible one  
 the failure  
 parent to parents  
 the bully  
 "always left out"  
 little miss sunshine  
 sicko  
 stupid



*If your role was omitted above, please write it in.*

**Lesson 5**

**HEALING THE CHILDREN WITHIN**

Who are the children within?

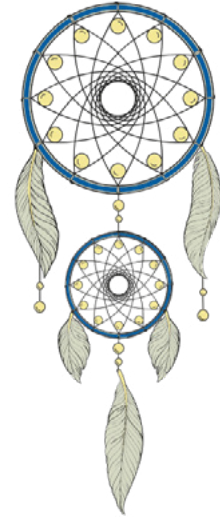
1. Voices inside carrying the feelings you were unable to express as a child.
  - a. Fear, anger, shame, despair
  - b. Excitement, joy, happiness, love—these have been denied
2. Whether you were ignored, belittled, or abused, you learned early on not to feel safe and not to feel.
3. You learned that to feel meant to be vulnerable and to be vulnerable meant not to survive. You wanted to survive. You learned not to feel.

A connection to your intuition or real self and an ability to identify and process feelings are basic to our emotional well-being.

Many of us feel displaced and unprepared for today's challenges. We need ways to deal with these feelings.

We need to learn how to identify, express, release, and transform what we feel.

Learning to do this demands that you experience what you felt in childhood because that was when you first learned about feelings.



## RESOLVING GRIEF

There are so many emotions when we are grieving a loss.  
and often they come at odd times when we are least expecting it.  
But, we need to experience all the emotions and simply be there  
with the pain.  
We need to look at what was lost—all of it.  
Identifying the losses within the losses—looking at them with courage.  
And, with time, we can learn to see the ways we have idealized our  
old relationships and attachments.  
How we have made them better in our minds,  
without remembering the bad times as well as the good.  
We can learn to see it all—the whole thing—the way it really was,  
with the balance every relationship contains.  
Little by little, as we are ready, we see and we feel—  
taking pieces at a time.  
And, with patience, we will be able to put our emotions, our caring,  
our energy into new relationships.  
We will not forget, but we will go on living as whole human beings.





## DON'T GIVE UP—CHANGES TAKE TIME

The healing process is a continuum.

It begins with an experience of survival,

an awareness of the

fact that you lived through the abuse

and made it to adulthood.

It ends with thriving.

The experience of a satisfying life

no longer programmed by what happened to you as a child.

## STAGES OF HEALING

**The decision to heal**, this is a conscious decision that you need/want to heal from something that is tender and hurtful.

**Remembering**, this is not reliving the experience, it's about accepting that it happened, that it was a reality for you. It's believing that it happened.

**Breaking the silence**, this is the decision to say that it was real, it is talking with a counselor or another trusted individual, journaling or writing about it. Taking part in a Talking Circle, or another type of support group.

**Understanding that it was not your fault**, you did not do anything to make it this way, nor did you have any control over it or could make it stop.

**Making contact** with the child within, this is who was hurt and this is who needs to be healed, healing the child within yourself heals the adult as well.

**Trusting yourself**, you have made a decision, trust that you are capable of healing yourself.

**Grieving/mourning**, part of the healing process is to grieve those things lost to us.

**Anger**, the backbone of healing.

**Spirituality**, recognizing that we do not have to do this alone, we can seek connection with the Great Mystery asking Creator to give us the courage to begin this process.

**Resolution/moving on**, this stage is harder than it looks, because coming to terms with and moving on from what happened to us can be an act of acceptance that perhaps we did not get the parent or caregiver we deserved, but that we are resolving our past within ourselves and coming to terms with our past.

## Lesson 6

# A TREE GOES THROUGH FOUR SEASONS

### SPRING

A time of new hope, new vision  
 Re-growth of trust  
 New change is in the air, new energy flow is noticeable  
 Experiment with new approaches, old boundaries are changed, expanded, removed  
 Begin to separate old from new, break through thinking emerges  
 Emotionally charged, exciting time

### WINTER

Hard to let go of its shape  
 Starting to feel dead  
 One by one the leaves of success are taken from us by the winds of change, as it starts to fall apart  
 Can't seem to answer these three questions:

1. *Who are we?*
2. *Why are we?*
3. *Where are we going?*

### SUMMER

New structures & process solidify  
 New patterns of communication solidify  
 New boundaries understood and accepted  
 Life gets solid, the tree takes shape, it knows who it is and what it is, it is a maturing time

### FALL

Peak performance  
 Energy cooking  
 Individually - in the "groove"

Every four years you lose the answers to these three questions.

Individually – your beliefs, habits, and attitudes that have carried you through are now falling apart. When you can't answer the three questions, you withdraw. You are lost as it gets deeper into the season of winter and those questions in the season of summer where you examine and you look within yourself are growing quieter. You feel the need to be by yourself but do not know why.

Winter is the time and way you sort, heal – don't get sucked into the tendency of codependency. Like each individual tree, you can be in a different season from your mate and the relationship itself can have its own season. Each season will pass in time. You cannot be in a season for longer unless you resist it. Like the tree when it doesn't resist Winter, each Summer it will take on a new shape, perhaps bigger, more beautiful, and fuller.

Knowing the season you are in – just go back and think about the last time you were really hard on yourself, down on yourself, when even praying is difficult. This would be your winter. The best thing to do when you are in Winter is to get by yourself and examine yourself. It is nature's law – that which is built will turn on itself and destroy itself, returning itself back to the earth. This is how rebirth and renewal occur. Conflict precedes clarity.

Whenever you have a Spiritual experience, you jump into Spring.

## PLANT YOUR OWN GARDEN, DECORATE YOUR OWN SOUL

After a while you learn the subtle difference  
Between holding a hand and chaining a soul,  
And you learn that love doesn't mean leaning  
And company doesn't mean security,  
And you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts  
And presents aren't promises,  
And you begin to accept your defeats  
With your head up and your eyes open  
With the grace of a woman, not the grief of a child,  
And you learn to build all your roads on today,  
Because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for plans,  
And futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight.  
After a while you learn  
That even sunshine burns if you get too much.  
So you plant your own garden and decorate your own soul,  
Instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers.  
And you learn that you really can endure . . .  
That you really are strong,  
And you really do have worth.  
And you learn and learn . . .  
With every goodbye you learn.

*Author: Veronica A. Shoffstall*



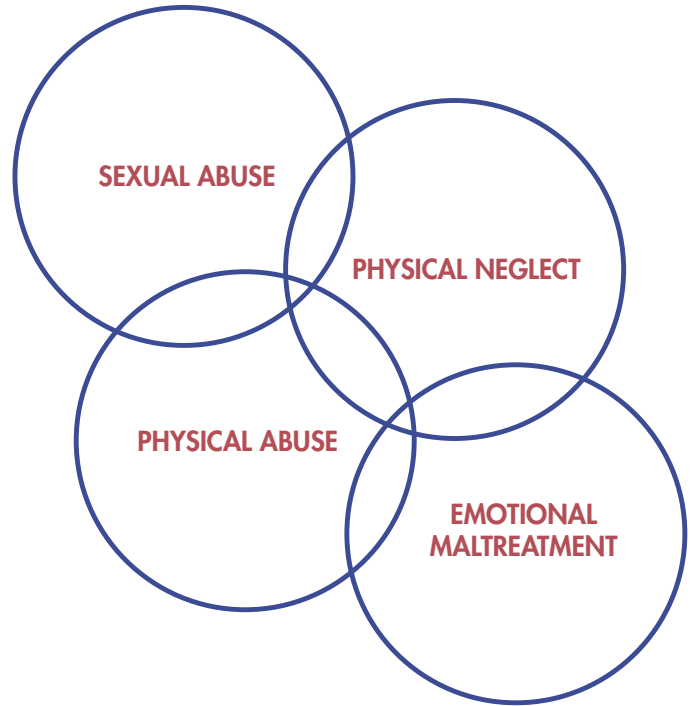
## **Lesson 7**

### **BELIEF SYSTEMS**

Belief systems are developed from many different life experiences. These experiences together form the foundation for how we experience life. If we learn many dysfunctional or painful behaviors, these belief systems set the foundation for hurtful family relationships, where abuse may be ignored or treated as normal. These beliefs are then internalized, leading to intergenerational patterns of dysfunctional behaviors.

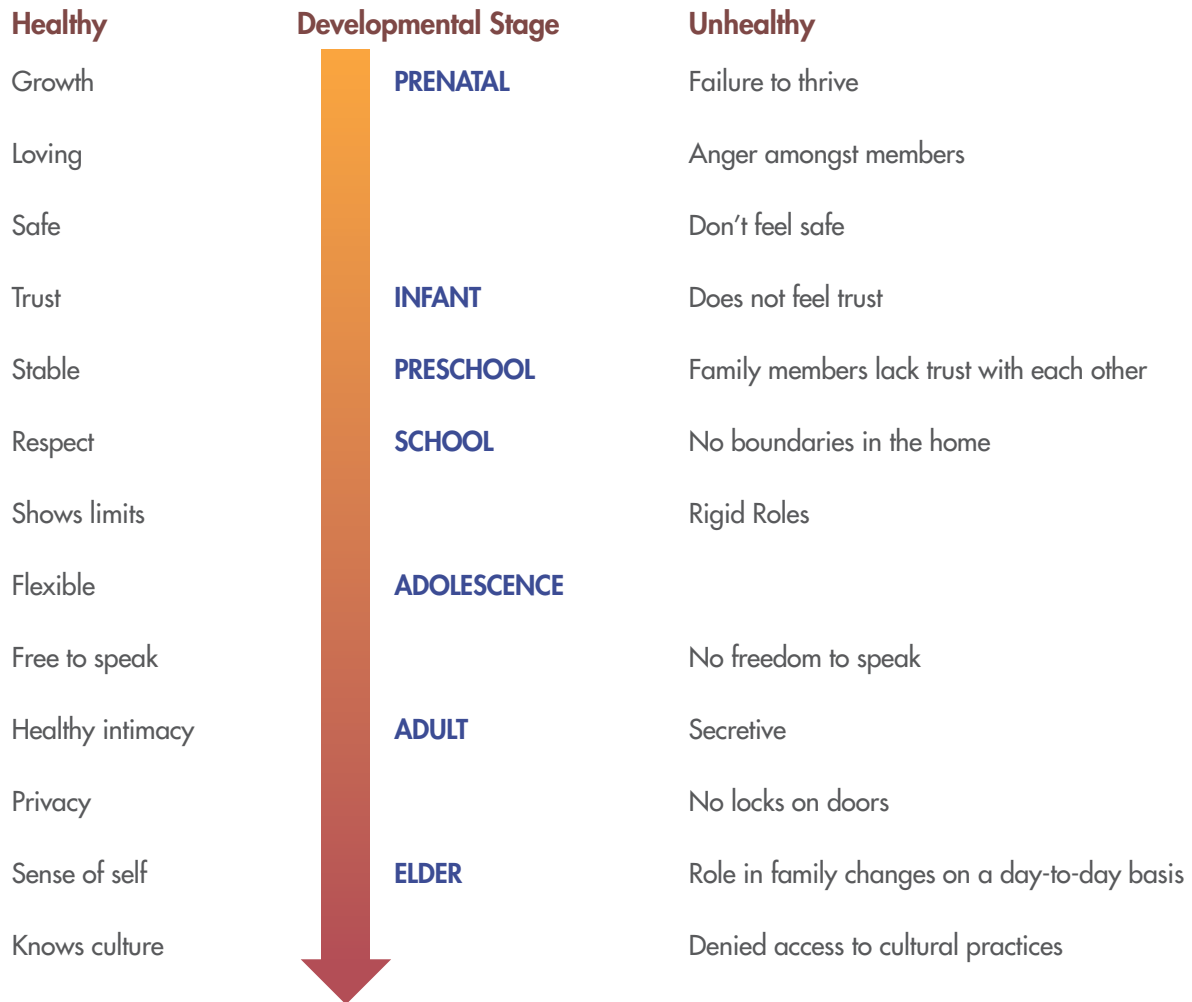
Dysfunctional belief systems can contribute to the continuation of the cycle of abuse from generation to generation.

2020 Redelk/Yéil Koow Shaawát/Belief sys.



## HOW BELIEF SYSTEMS DEVELOP

In a belief system, mirroring (what you see) behaviors progress and are continued throughout the developmental stages from prenatal to Elder. At each stage, family systems are impacted with healthy or unhealthy learning experiences.



## IDENTIFYING THE TRAUMATIZATION AND ITS ROOTS

Identifying how and what you learned from your families during your childhood is an important step in understanding who you are today and why you are the way you are. While growing up, you develop beliefs about being in relationships, being with yourself, self-esteem, self-discipline, parenting, working, and boundaries. Because you develop your belief systems from your families, they are a profound influence.

If you experienced abuse or grew up in an alcoholic family, you were affected emotionally, physically, mentally, spiritually, and culturally. Your recovery begins with the process of looking at how you think about the dysfunction or abuse, how you felt about the abuse, and how you react to it.



Healing comes in seeking a balance of



to the traumatic events.



## HEALTHY BELIEF SYSTEMS

A healthy belief system includes balance between cultural pride and awareness, powerful feelings of self-worth and self-love, and a strong supportive family system based on *respect, flexibility, openness, and continued growth*. This type of system is always moving towards a heightened sense of balance and awareness.



Celebration 2010, Juneau, Alaska

### Cultural Dynamics

Recognizing that as a Native, Indigenous person you are part of a larger system



### Developmental Dynamics (Self)

Recognizing that cultural identity is integral to one's spiritual, emotional, and mental health



## OUR BELIEFS

Where do we get our beliefs/values?

Can our beliefs change?

Is it important to share our beliefs and values? If yes, with whom and how?

It is ok to force our values and beliefs on others? Why or why not?

What are your five most important values/beliefs?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## INFLUENCES ON BELIEF SYSTEMS

Of the following, what did each of these systems tell me?

Parents	=
Television	=
School	=
Religion	=
Culture	=
Family	=
Friends	=
Counselors	=
Books	=
Teachers	=
Brothers/Sisters	=
Yourself	=
Society	=



How did these systems affect you in the following areas?

SPIRITUALLY	PHYSICALLY	EMOTIONALLY	MENTALLY

## FIVE TYPES OF DYSFUNCTIONAL DYNAMICS

We may not recognize how the environment we grew up in demonstrated dysfunctional family dynamics. Similar to symptoms of anxiety and depression, the signs may range from mild to severe, and signs can go unnoticed in the everyday lives of dysfunctional families. Here are 5 types of dysfunctional family dynamics:

- 1. The Chronic Conflict Family:** In this type of dysfunctional family, members fight with each other in harmful ways. They'll leave one another physically or emotionally wounded. The tension is bred from toxic parental styles, such as abusive and authoritarian styles. The parents usually will be strict, rigid, and unreasonably harsh with their kids. Fear is a tool commonly used to maintain control, and punishment methods are often abusive mistreatment that can be traumatizing for the individual. Prolonged conflict within the family can damage a child's neurochemistry, which can create chronic stress, anxiety, depression, and an insecure attachment style as they cultivate relationships outside of the household.
- 2. The Pathological Household:** In this type of family, severe psychological, mental health disorders, terminal illness, or substance abuse or drug addiction affect the members everyday lives. One or both parents may suffer from terminal illnesses such as cancer, mental disorders like schizophrenia, personality disorders such as borderline personality disorder, or mood disorders like bipolar disorder. Along with drug addiction problems, one or both parents may also have addictions associated with alcohol or gambling. In a pathological household, the family roles are reversed; the children are more responsible and take care of everyday functions, and the parents are the ones being looked after. The parents' disorders or illnesses can cause children to become preoccupied with tasks they aren't meant to handle until they are more mature. This can cause them to develop social deficiencies, anxiety, and depression over time.
- 3. The Chaotic Household:** In this type of family, the children are often poorly looked after when the parents are too busy, are not present, or do not set clear and consistent rules. The parents do not establish any organization, system, or routine that the whole family can follow, which makes it hard for the children to find any grounding or assurance. Often the older siblings take on the responsibilities the parents have failed to fulfill, and they learn to play the role of the caretakers. Meanwhile, the younger or school-age children in the chaotic household usually have trouble with discipline, concentrating in school, and listening to authority figures.
- 4. The Dominant-Submissive Household:** In this type of family, one parent is the dictator while the other is passively obedient. The dictator parent has no consideration for the wishes or feelings of the other family members. This often causes the other parent to feel depressed, and they usually have a lot of repressed, negative, and angry emotions. Consequently, the whole family faces tension and all the members are extremely unhappy and dissatisfied with their home life. While one parent is controlling and pays little attention to the way that their actions affect the whole family, the rest of the members suffer silently from their choices, showing little open revolt.
- 5. The Emotionally Distant Family:** This may be one of the least obvious dysfunctional family types. On the outside, nothing is loudly or noticeably chaotic. But behind closed doors, there is very little affection shown between the family members. The parents rarely show warmth towards their children, which teaches them to repress their feelings as they get older. This brings about an insecure or nonexistent attachment that can negatively affect the child's identity, self-esteem, and ability to form relationships with others. In this household, communication is rarely open, and the members often choose to deal with their problems alone instead of seeking help.

**Discussion:** What type of dysfunctional family dynamic resonates the most with you? We understand that this is a hard topic to talk about, but we strive to be a space where you can open up to each other and communicate with one another. We encourage you to share your story during the Talking Circle.

**Lesson 8**

**BECOMING AWARE**

When we were born, we could not walk or talk or even focus our eyes. But the ability to do all these things and more was born in us. By continual effort, we still grow and learn and develop our identities. We learned early that we were not a bird and not an animal. And this is where personality begins to question – then,

What am I? Who am I? Why am I here?

Is this an identity crisis? No, it is a belief crisis. Every person has a hard time believing she has a specific reason for being here. Some have such a hard time believing that they go out and demand what others have. They see themselves outside the circle – not believing their own words and beliefs put them where they are. To a Cherokee, status is freedom to move, freedom to achieve honor within oneself, freedom to worship, and freedom to do what is right without ridicule.

They (the Cherokees) are apt in catching the spirit of growth....

**EVENING PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

**Twelve Questions to Ask Myself**

1. Was I resentful?
2. Was I selfish?
3. Was I dishonest?
4. Was I afraid?
5. Do I owe anyone an apology?
6. Was I kind to everyone?
7. Did I offer love to all?
8. Could I have done anything better today?
9. Was I thinking only of myself today?
10. Was I thinking of what I could do for others today?
11. Did I ask the Creator for forgiveness?
12. Did I ask what I could do to make amends?



Lesson 9

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.



**TRIGGER CHART WITH EXAMPLE**

TRIGGER	REACTION/ RESPONSE	TRAUMATIC MEMORY/ EVENT	COPING SKILL	SHARE/DISCLOSE
Green Car	Heart racing, leg shaking, fearful, crying.	I was assaulted by 2 men in a green car.	Paced breathing, self-soothing, grounding.	Explain to my date that I am triggered by the green car that passed us on the street.

## Lesson 10

# CODEPENDENCY

Codependency is a concept developed within the chemically dependent family. It originates in the family of origin. When a child is raised in a family where there is no one around that they can depend on, they really don't ever learn that they can depend on themselves. Some become very dependable and get into a relationship with someone that needs to depend on them, and some of us begin to depend on externals—and those externals eventually become our addictions.

The symptoms of codependence are like polarization—our reactions are extremes to people and things going on around us and in us. We might be under responsible, or we might be over responsible; we might be perfectionistic or too loose and procrastinating. We experience wide emotion swings. Many of the symptoms of codependence match the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. People who have experienced trauma tend to have personality collapse, fears, anxiety, agitation responses, and sexual and social inhibitions. Codependence exhibits these same symptoms. In fact, codependency comes from the same types of effects as post-traumatic stress disorder.

Some other characteristics of codependence includes hyper-vigilance, stress-related illness, and enmeshed or low functioning relationships. Codependency is usually seen in terms of relationships. In fact, codependency is not about relationships with other people—it's more about an absence of relationship with self.

Most of the symptoms of codependency exhibit themselves in relationships with other people, but their relationship disease is still more about the dis"ease" in our relationship with ourselves. It stems from the low functioning relationship with our families when we were young. Codependents do tend to mistake enmeshment as intimacy and that is the polarization of their reactivity. They tend to not just get into enmeshed relationships, but sometime struggle out of those relationships. Usually in the struggle we remain more enmeshed than we were before we started the struggle! But once in a while we break away from a relationship and we experience independence. Some people remain in the independence posture which is also codependency. That person stays out of relationships because they can't take care of themselves; they lose too much of themselves in relationships with other people.

The other posture is counter-dependence, where we defy and sabotage the systems and the relationship that we are in. All three of these role positions are positions of codependence.

There really are not secrets in families, there is only denial. In talking about the secrets, we start to heal from the effect the secret has in our life. Our shame is exposed to light, and it no longer has us. In families where there is alcoholism, sexual abuse, parental discord, or dishonesty going on, we know we are not supposed to talk about these things. So, recovery is where we learn to talk about them and learn to share. We also learn that these things are not about who we were, but about what was going on around us.

It is also important to note that we get as controlled by the reason we kept the secret as the secret itself. And that's a part we often miss in recovery. Often, we kept the secret in the fear that it would hurt someone.

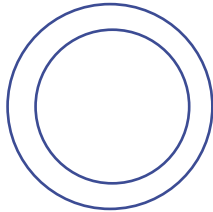
Codependency is the child's reaction to family dysfunction. Codependency is really about a lot of things. It's a cultural, personal, and family issue. Codependence is about that lack of self-intimacy. This is a symptom of the codependence.

It's hard to understand boundaries until we understand enmeshment. Many of us were beaten or neglected off of the path of becoming ourselves, which is the bottom line of our spirituality. But many of us got enmeshed on someone else's path. We got scripted to live out a life for them. It's hard to develop boundaries when we are enmeshed in someone else's reality. You can't set limits until you know yourself, and once you know yourself, you have your limits and it's very hard to violate that. Most of the hurt that is experienced from life, is from the inside that taps into a person's own emptiness. When we know ourselves, love ourselves, and hang around gentle people, our boundaries are less rigid; they are flexible, they are gentle, but we know what they are, and we know what we can handle. Addiction and abuse are examples of not having a sense of boundaries or having our boundaries violated.

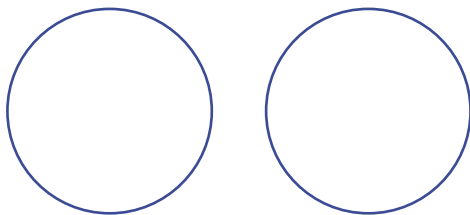
People do not recover from codependency by leaving a relationship, but sometimes we have to have some separation or detachment from a relationship so that we can do our recovery. People in relationships with people in recovery also need support because of all the changes and their fears. They sometimes feel a sense of isolation while their partner is doing their recovery work. In relationships we need to do our work separately for a while before we try to come together and do it.

Source: Pia Mellody

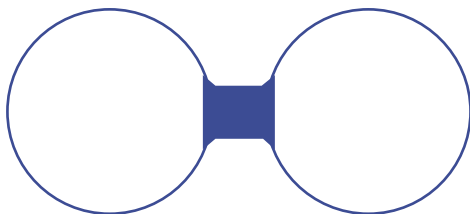
## CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIPS



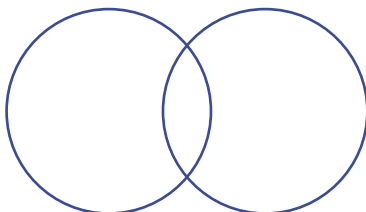
**Codependent relationships** are characterized by a lack of boundaries. Usually, one person is more controlling of the other and can dictate where they go, who they see, and how long they are allowed to be away from them. This is a relationship that is enmeshed; you often can't tell them apart (e.g., 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.



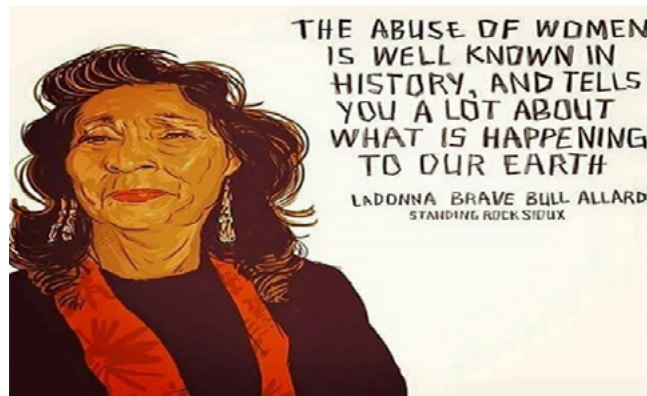
A couple in a codependent or independent relationship might seek couples counseling. However, this may not be effective because one or the other might not feel safe enough to be truthful. Instead, a counselor could seek to pull the codependent relationship apart and provide individual counseling, helping 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.

## PERSONAL BALANCE

Personal balance, says the Native person, is a matter of self-restraint, steadiness, and consistency. We like to think we have some of each. We want to believe we know a good thing when we see it—and because we can see it, we can possess it as well. Balance means living squarely, or with truth. It means seeing that what we believe and what we talk about dictate what we get out of life. If we shortchange, we get shortchanged. If we whip and beat and scheme to get the better of someone, time will equalize it. No one really gets away with anything. We love to win, but if deceit comes in, so do all the factors of balance. A smokescreen blows away with the slightest change in pressure. We get what we give—good or bad.



## INTIMACY

1. I often feel alienated from other people, as if I'm from another planet.  

ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
--------	---------	-----------	--------	-------
2. Most of my relationships just don't work.  

ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
--------	---------	-----------	--------	-------
3. I don't have many friends.  

ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
--------	---------	-----------	--------	-------
4. I'm okay with my friends, but I just can't work things out with a lover.  

ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
--------	---------	-----------	--------	-------
5. I think I'm really meant to be alone.  

ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
--------	---------	-----------	--------	-------
6. I'm not sure I really deserve to be loved.  

ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
--------	---------	-----------	--------	-------
7. I don't know what love is.  

ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
--------	---------	-----------	--------	-------

## INTIMACY (continued)

- |  |        |         |           |        |       |
|--|--------|---------|-----------|--------|-------|
| 8. I think people are going to leave me.                                   | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 9. I test people a lot.  | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 10. It's hard for me to be nurtured or to nurture someone else.            | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 11. I'm clingy with people I'm close to. I'm afraid to be alone.           | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 12. I'm scared of making a commitment. When people get too close, I panic. | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 13. I have a hard time saying, "no."                                       | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 14. People take advantage of me in relationships.                          | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 15. I get involved with people who are inappropriate or inaccessible.      | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 16. I'm struggling a lot with my partner.                                  | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 17. I've had relationships with people who remind me of my abuser.         | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 18. Sometimes I think my partner is my abuser.                             | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |
| 19. Sexual abuse is really creating problems in my relationships.          | ALWAYS | USUALLY | SOMETIMES | RARELY | NEVER |

## HOW TO RECOGNIZE A GOOD WOMAN

A Good Woman is proud. She respects herself and others. She is aware of who she is. She neither seeks definition from the person she is with, nor does she expect them to read her mind. She is quite capable of articulating her needs.

A good woman is hopeful. She is strong enough to make all her dreams come true. She knows love; therefore, she gives love. She recognizes that her love has great value and must be reciprocated. If her love is taken for granted, it soon disappears.

A good woman has a dash of inspiration and a dabble of endurance. She knows that she will at times have to inspire others to reach the potential God gave them.

A good woman knows her past, understands her present and grows toward the future.

A good woman knows God. She knows that with God the world is her playground, but without God she will be played with.

A good woman does not live in fear of the future because of her past. Instead, she understands that her life experiences are merely lessons meant to bring her closer to self-knowledge and unconditional self-love.



## INTIMACY

As you heal, you will change, and your loved ones will be challenged to change along with you if you are to create healthy, meaningful relationships. This is often stressful, but if both of you are committed to growing personally, you will be more likely to see changes as positive and to welcome—or at least tolerate—them.

### Calculated Risks

Learning to be intimate isn't comfortable or easy. Becoming intimate means peeling back the layers of protection to let someone in.

Intimacy is experienced in the moment as part of a changing, fluid relationship. Learning to be intimate is a slow process involving mistakes, small successes, and backsliding.

To break through to a deeper level of intimacy, you need to take calculated risks. A calculated risk is different from a blind leap. A blind leap is when you shut your eyes, leap forward and hope everything will work out magically. You start an affair with a married man, positive he'll leave his wife. You get pregnant, hoping the baby will save a faltering relationship. You tell a friend your deepest secrets a week after you've met.

Calculated risks are different. With a calculated risk, you weigh your chances and choices, and step out onto the ice only when you're relatively sure it's solid. With intimacy nothing is 100 percent sure, but with forethought and a responsive partner, you maximize your chances for communication, increased closeness, and satisfaction.

### Learning to Trust

Survivors tend to see trust as an absolute, either not trusting at all or trusting completely. You may bounce between the two, not trusting until you are so desperate for contact that you throw your trust at the first likely target. Since most people can't handle that kind of desperation, you end up disappointed or abandoned, thus confirming your original fears – that people aren't trustworthy, that you aren't lovable, that love isn't worth it.

Before you can trust anyone else, you have to trust yourself. If you know you can take care of yourself, you won't need to blindly fling your trust out in the hope that someone will take care of you.

Remember, trust accrues over time. It's earned!

## INTIMACY – PAGE TWO

### Experiment with Trust

As you come to trust yourself, you build a foundation for trusting someone else. You can always go back to not trusting if you want to, but at least give it a try.

1. Ask your partner to make dinner for you on a night you're going to be late.
2. Trust someone in your talking circle to hug you in a nonsexual way.
3. Call a friend when you're feeling sad and ask if she'll spend a little time with you.
4. Ask someone to go to a movie with you.

If the experiment fails and you are let down, try to analyze what happened.

1. Whom did I pick to trust?
2. How long did I know the person?
3. Did we have good communication?
4. What kind of thing did I trust the person with?
5. Did I explain what I was doing, letting them know it was very important to me?
6. Did I make my expectations clear?
7. Were there elements in the interchange that paralleled my original abuse?

### Giving and Receiving

There are two sides to intimacy: giving and receiving. You may have a hard time with one or with both. The way to learn either is to practice. If you have been unable to give, start by giving someone what's easiest for you—perhaps a compliment or a favorite food. As time goes on, work up to giving things that are harder. You need to work toward being able to give people what they need, when they need it.

Receiving feels wonderful once you get used to it. But first you must acknowledge how scary it is to be open. If, as a child, you were left to take care of yourself or there were strings attached to getting what you needed, you learned that nurturing was either unavailable or unsafe. But now, receiving doesn't have to mean owing something back.

In healthy relationships, there is a balance to giving and receiving. If you've always leaned heavily one way, you will need to focus more on the other aspect, but eventually, as you feel safer, both giving and receiving will develop a relaxed rhythm.

## SEXUAL INTIMACY AND LOVE—KEEPING LOVE ALIVE

Couples who remain happily in love over long periods of time more consistently exhibit these behaviors:

1. They tend to express love verbally. This simply means saying “I love you” or some equivalent (in contrast to that attitude best summarized by “What do you mean, do I love you? I married you, didn’t I!”). Words can nurture feelings and keep love strong and in the forefront of the relationship.
2. They tend to be physically affectionate. This includes handholding, hugging, kissing, cuddling, and comforting — with a cup of tea, a pillow, or a woolly blanket.
3. They tend to express their love sexually. Sexual intimacy is an important vehicle of contact and expression. Sex remains vital for them long after the excitement of novelty has passed. This does not mean that they regard sex as the most significant aspect of their relationship. They are far more likely to regard their connection at the level of soul as the core of their relationship.
4. They express their appreciation and admiration. Happy couples talk about what they like, enjoy, and admire in each other. As a result, they feel visible, appreciated, valued.
5. They participate in mutual self-disclosure. This is a willingness to share more of themselves and more of their inner lives with each other than with any other person. They share thoughts, feelings, hopes, dreams, aspirations; hurt, anger, longing, and memories of painful or embarrassing experiences.
6. They offer each other an emotional support system. They are there for each other in times of illness, difficulty, hardship, and crisis. They are best friends to each other. They are generally helpful, nurturing and devoted to each other’s interests and well-being.
7. They express love materially. They express love with gifts (big or small) or tasks performed to lighten the burden of the partner’s life, such as sharing work or doing more than agreed-upon chores.
8. They accept demands or put up with shortcomings. Demands and shortcomings are part of every happy relationship. So are the benevolence and grace with which we respond to them. Each knows he or she is not perfect and does not demand perfection of the other. They are clear that the partner’s virtues outweigh the shortcomings, and they choose to enjoy the positive rather than drown the relationship in a preoccupation with the negatives. This does not mean they do not ask for changes in behavior they find undesirable.
9. They create time to be alone together. This time is exclusively devoted to themselves. Enjoying and nurturing their relationship rank very high among their priorities: they understand that love requires attention and leisure. Such couples tend to regard their relationship as more interesting, more exciting, more fulfilling than any other aspect of social existence. They are clearly not looking for excuses to escape from each other.

# Lesson 11

## THE CYCLE OF LIFE

### Stages of Development by Erik Erikson

AGE	HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT	UNHEALTHY DEVELOPMENT
1st Year	<p><b>Trust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need TLC and body contact</li> <li>People are good and trustworthy</li> <li>World is a good place</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mistrust</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family breakup or parental rejection</li> <li>World is not safe</li> <li>Withdrawal in later life</li> <li>Unable to trust and develop close relationships</li> </ul>
1–2 Years	<p><b>Autonomy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I love this world and all it offers</li> <li>Exploration/Independence</li> <li>Become your own being; separate from parent</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shame/Doubt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over controlled by parents</li> <li>Shame on you or bad boy/bad girl frequently</li> <li>Fearful or ashamed of self in later life</li> </ul>
3–7 Years	<p><b>Initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active imagination</li> <li>Role play and pretend</li> <li>Test boundaries between imagination and reality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Guilt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Told don't be silly and grow up</li> <li>Made to feel foolish for using imagination</li> <li>Develop unreasonable fears and guilt in later life</li> <li>May live in fantasy and daydream in later life</li> </ul>
8–11 Years	<p><b>Accomplishment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feel good for something and good at something</li> <li>Need to receive praise and recognition for accomplishments</li> </ul>	<p><b>Low Self-Esteem</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overly critical parents</li> <li>Feel no good and lack self-confidence</li> <li>Low self-esteem in later life</li> </ul>
12–18 Years	<p><b>Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to belong, to be somebody</li> <li>Need to get attention and praise for things done well</li> <li>Develop answers to questions like, "Who am I?" and "Where am I going?"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Inferiority</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack self-worth</li> <li>Low self-esteem</li> <li>Become good at being bad</li> <li>Attracts attention inappropriately</li> <li>Later life problems may be depression, suicide attempts, addictions</li> </ul>
19-30 Years	<p><b>Intimacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share ideas with friends</li> <li>Openly shares innermost thoughts and feelings</li> <li>Not worried about what others think of you</li> </ul>	<p><b>Isolation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coldness, inability to share thoughts and feelings</li> <li>Unable to form and maintain close relationships</li> <li>Unreasonable fears of openness and disclosure</li> </ul>
30-40 Years	<p><b>Generativity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unselfish giving/sharing</li> <li>Give to and guide others</li> <li>Not looking for what's in it for me</li> <li>Service to others</li> </ul>	<p><b>Stagnation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-centered/seeking</li> <li>Take from others</li> <li>What's in it for me</li> <li>Overly materialistic</li> </ul>
Rest of Life	<p><b>Integrity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentally healthy adult</li> <li>Break away from parents and relate to them on an adult level</li> <li>Sees order and worth in the world</li> <li>Have sense of own values, rules, and code of life</li> </ul>	<p><b>Despair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fear and hopelessness</li> <li>Judgmental, prejudiced</li> <li>Can't trust others</li> <li>Feels world is a bad place</li> <li>May lack good values and conscience</li> </ul>

## SIGNS OF A HEALTHY FAMILY



### **A healthy family:**

Members communicate their needs to other members in a safe, sensitive, and supportive environment.

Teaches and learns from the children.

Has mutual respect for each individual member.

Has healthy boundaries.

Has flexibility of roles between generations within the family unit.

Uses “crisis” for the growth of its members.

Initiates and maintains growth of relationships both inside and outside of the family.

### **Each family member has:**

The ability to negotiate with other members of the family without put downs.

The ability to say yes or no without the price tag of rejection.

The ability to ask without demanding.

Confidence in the stability of the relationship.

The ability to show feelings of all kinds without fear of losing the relationship.

The ability to have specific relationships with individuals in the family.

Each family member has the ability to celebrate, have fun, and play.

## **TRAITS OF A HEALTHY FAMILY BY DOLORES CURRAN**

The healthy family . . .

1. Communicates and listens.
2. Affirms and supports one another.
3. Teaches respect for others.
4. Develops a sense of trust.
5. Has a sense of play and humor.
6. Exhibits a sense of shared responsibility.
7. Teaches a sense of right and wrong.
8. Has a strong sense of family in which rituals and traditions abound.
9. Has a balance of interaction among members.
10. Has a shared religious core.
11. Respects the privacy of one another.
12. Values service to others.
13. Fosters family table time and conversation.
14. Shares leisure time.
15. Admits to and seeks help with problems.



## ACTIVE RELAXATION

Most people are not aware that when they are upset or agitated, one or more of their muscle groups are tense, and their breathing is rapid and shallow. If we can learn to control our muscle tension and our breathing, we can teach our bodies to stay relatively calm and relaxed even in upsetting situations. The following is a procedure for achieving relaxation quickly. By practicing every day, within two to three weeks, you will be able to relax your body by simply saying, "Relax," to yourself in real life situations with your child and in other stressful situations as well.

- Get comfortable in your chair. Place your arms on the arms of the chair. Close your eyes and keep them closed throughout the entire exercise.
- Become aware of the various muscle groups in your body (e.g., hands and arms; face, neck, and shoulders; chest and stomach; hips, legs, and feet).
- Bend your arms at the elbow. Then, make a tight fist with both hands while tightening biceps and forearms. Hold for 5 seconds. Pay attention to the tension. Then relax. Pay attention to the relaxation.
- Tense your entire face and shoulders, tightly shut your eyes, and wrinkle your forehead, pull the corners of your mouth towards your ears, tighten your neck, and hunch your shoulders. Hold for 5 seconds. Pay attention to the tension. Relax. Pay attention to the relaxation.
- Take in a deep breath and arch your back. Hold this position for 5 seconds. Now relax. Take in another deep breath and press out your stomach. Hold...and relax.
- Raise your feet off the floor while keeping your knees straight. Pull your feet and toes back toward your face and tighten the muscles in your shins. Hold...and relax. Now, curl your toes down toward the floor, tighten your calves, thighs and buttocks and hold...and relax.
- Scan each muscle group in your mind and relax any tense muscles.
- Now, become aware of your breathing. Slow your breathing down as you breathe in and out, in and out.
- With your next deep breath, count slowly from 1 to 5 as you breathe in and count from 6 to 10 as you breathe out. Your stomach should expand and deflate with each breath.
- Repeat this deep, slow, breathing...in and out...in and out... Stop when you are feeling deeply relaxed.
- Say the word, "Relax" to yourself approximately 20 times every time you exhale.
- Now, gradually let your breathing return to normal and open your eyes.

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

**Facilitator's Guide**

**PHASE II: Personal and Family Development**

*A 14-Week Curriculum for Native Women*

2022