

Activities



Culture Walk

1. Ask all participants to line up on one side of the room and to not talk.
2. Ask the participants to think about their cultural identity.
3. Share that the purpose of this activity is to help create awareness of our own feelings about our own cultural identity and our relationships with people from other cultures.
4. Begin with music and ask the following questions:

Will everyone who is or who identifies with _____ please walk to the other side of the room. Look around you and see who is in your group...and who is not. Now return to the other side of the room.

Identifies with:

1. Being married or living together
2. Indian reservation or native village life
3. Alcoholism or drug abuse in the family/community
4. The recovery movement
5. Domestic or family violence/abuse (including physical, mental, sexual, verbal)
6. Native American spirituality
7. Disabilities
8. Indian and Native boarding schools or residential schools
9. Cultural oppression from outside and inside your family/community
10. Death of a loved one
11. Foster care/adoption
12. Racism
13. Cultural Loss
14. Divorce or separation
15. Single parenting
16. Repetitive relationships or multiple marriages
17. Re-location
18. _____ Any other categories the trainer would find appropriate for the training, the community, or the group

The Trauma Web

The column on the left lists various types of trauma that can affect our lives. The column on the right lists characteristics of trauma. Any of these may have affected you, your parents, grandparents, or other people who have had a significant impact on your life. For each of the traumas and characteristics that have affected you, your family, or significant others, draw a line connecting that trauma or characteristic to “you” in the center of the page.

Fear of conflict and anger
Death of a loved one
Gambling addiction
Physical abuse
Verbal abuse
Cultural loss
Alcoholism
Neglect
Racism
Divorce
Poverty
Violence
Adoption
Disability
Relocation
Foster care
Oppression
Sexual abuse
Loss of a job
War experiences
Boarding school
Discrimination of any kind
Unable to relax, let go and have fun

YOU

Frequent periods of depression
Difficulty hearing positives
Continuing sense of guilt
Need to be in control
Fear of dependency
Overly responsible
Very irresponsible
Overachievement
Emotional abuse
Poor self-images
Need to be right
Fear of trusting
Perfectionist
Chaos junkies
Fear of feeling
Fear of intimacy
Loss of Spirituality
Underachievement
Denial of problems
Fear of incompetence
Compulsive behavior
Heavily depends on others
Repetitive relationship patterns
Hypersensitive to the needs of others

Your Behavior During Conflict

Listed below are statements which can be thought of as different strategies for resolving conflict. Using the scale below, indicate in front of each statement how typical that statement is of your actions in conflict.

5 = very typical, 4 = frequently typical, 3 = sometimes typical, 2 = seldom typical, 1 = never

- | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. ___ change the subject | | | | | |
| 2. ___ jump right in with an argument or response | | | | | |
| 3. ___ ask a friend to mediate | | | | | |
| 4. ___ try to make the problem go away | | | | | |
| 5. ___ attempt to understand the other person | | | | | |
| 6. ___ avoid quarrelsome people | | | | | |
| 7. ___ get mad | | | | | |
| 8. ___ give up | | | | | |
| 9. ___ go for the compromise | | | | | |
| 10. ___ resume the discussion when I'm not angry | | | | | |
| 11. ___ hint that there may be a problem | | | | | |
| 12. ___ get defensive | | | | | |
| 13. ___ give in | | | | | |
| 14. ___ quickly settle the dispute | | | | | |
| 15. ___ avoid the person, place or thing | | | | | |
| 16. ___ stay away from people who disagree with you | | | | | |
| 17. ___ I am right; you are wrong | | | | | |
| 18. ___ you pick your battles carefully | | | | | |
| 19. ___ feel unsatisfied after a conflict | | | | | |
| 20. ___ agree on how to talk about problems | ___ 1 | ___ 2 | ___ 3 | ___ 4 | ___ 5 |
| 21. ___ gloss over the problem | ___ 6 | ___ 7 | ___ 8 | ___ 9 | ___ 10 |
| 22. ___ win at all costs | ___ 11 | ___ 12 | ___ 13 | ___ 14 | ___ 15 |
| 23. ___ walking away is often better than fighting | ___ 16 | ___ 17 | ___ 18 | ___ 19 | ___ 20 |
| 24. ___ often feel you should have said more | ___ 21 | ___ 22 | ___ 23 | ___ 24 | ___ 25 |
| 25. ___ hear all sides before making a decision | ___ 26 | ___ 27 | ___ 28 | ___ 29 | ___ 30 |
| 26. ___ tend to prematurely forgive people | ___ 31 | ___ 32 | ___ 33 | ___ 34 | ___ 35 |
| 27. ___ get annoyed | | | | | |
| 28. ___ feel like your needs are never met | <u>Totals:</u> | | | | |
| 29. ___ take the attitude "it is for the best" | ___ A | ___ B | ___ C | ___ D | ___ E |
| 30. ___ go for the "win/win" solution | | | | | |
| 31. ___ withdraw from discussion | | | | | |
| 32. ___ are motivated to make sure the solution works | | | | | |
| 33. ___ I will give in this time; you give in next time | | | | | |
| 34. ___ feel like you cannot express what you truly feel | | | | | |
| 35. ___ look for the positives in the situation | | | | | |

After indicating your typical response to each of the 35 strategies above, separate the ratings that you gave to each strategy in the chart on the right of the page. Add up your totals. The highest totals will indicate your preferred typical response to conflict.

Column A is:

Column B is:

Column C is:

Column D is:

Column E is:

Your Behavior During Conflict (Answers)

Column A is “avoid” (Flight)

We may have learned to take “Flight.” For some of us, the lesson was that in times of conflict, it is easier to just get out of there, to leave. If we stayed around, something worse would happen. At the very least, if we left, we would not have to deal with the emotions involved in the conflict.

Column B is “compete” (Fight)

We may have learned to “Fight.” Some of us have grown up in family systems that taught us to fight for whatever we needed. If we were not willing to fight for something, we may not have gotten it. Or, if we were not willing to fight for ourselves, somehow we ended up losing something we did not want to lose. Sometimes we ended up hurt.

Column C is “surrender” (Fold)

We may have learned to “Fold” in the face of conflict. That is, we may have learned the simplest way to get past conflict is to surrender. We give in or give up and allow the other person to win. This is another way of avoiding conflict. The problem is the more we keep giving in, the more we give up any sense of our own value or self-worth. Alternately, some may surrender as a way of saying, “See how good I am? I will be a martyr and give in to you.”

Column D is “compromise” (Fudge)

We may have learned to “Fudge” in conflict. I will give a little if you give a little. Maybe we can negotiate some resolution we can both live with. At first glance, this seems to be an effective means for resolving conflict (and it can be), but it does not necessarily get you where you want to be. It means we both might be giving up something we do not really want to give up. It can also allow some people to secretly think, “You gave in a little bit. That shows you were wrong.”

Column E is “collaborate” (Fair)

Finally, we can approach the conflict in a “Fair” manner. Take the time to find out what our real needs are in the conflict. We can explore alternate solutions that may allow both of us to walk away from the resolution feeling like we have got what we wanted. This recognizes we may not know what the other person needs to resolve the conflict and we should communicate better.

Coyote Language

Effective communication requires that we send our messages in a good way, but also receive messages from others in a good way. This prompts us to pay attention to both habits we bring, how we choose to listen to others, as well as how others are sending their messages to us. How aware are we of the subtle (or not so subtle) messages that are sometimes directed toward us wrapped inside the words that others are saying?

It is essential that we practice healthy and effective listening. This means we are attentive and ever vigilant to uncover and recognize the many ways that others around us are using language as a means of judgment, power, and control, which may be filled with meanings that go beyond the mere words themselves.

In some tribal cultures it was Raven who was the trickster. For others it was Spider. And for some, it was Coyote. Coyote often used language in a way that held hidden meaning, hence, "Coyote Language." With a person seated near you, discuss which of the following statements are clear and direct and which may contain the hidden meanings of Coyote Language:

- Will you hurry up? You are going to make us late again.
- I get upset when you speak to me in that tone of voice.
- Why do you always do that?
- Do you have to buy something every time we're here?
- I do not think that looks good on you.
- You are working so much; we do not get to spend enough time together.

What might the hidden meanings be? How would we go about getting clarification for an improved communication? What other examples have you seen happening to you or around you?

Listening Self-evaluation

Participants may score their own listening behavior on the following scale: (4) Most of the time, (3) Frequently, (2) Sometimes, or (1) Almost never. Participants may add points for the questions with a plus sign (+), or subtract points for questions with a minus sign (-).

An alternative small group exercise: Place signs in different areas of the room and have participants stand next to the signs indicating their answers.

Do you:

- + Concentrate on what is being said, even if you are not really interested?
- Tune out people who say something you do not agree with or do not want to hear?
- + Listen to the other person's views, even if they are different from yours?
- Assume that you know what the speaker is going to say and stop listening?
- + Listen for main ideas, not just facts?
- Think of your answer while the other person is still speaking?
- + Listen to the speaker without judging or criticizing?
- Pretend you are listening, even when you are not?
- + Know which words or phrases tend to make you emotional?
- Daydream while the speaker is talking?
- + Think about how the other person might react to what you say?
- Interrupt the speaker when they are talking?

Relationship Roadmap

For this exercise you will need a note pad, pen, and some quiet time alone. On your note pad, consider your relationship needs in the following areas. Take time for this exercise. Let the questions prompt you to deeper thought, but not limit your thinking. Be open to the possibilities.

What do you need from your partner Intellectually? What educational background do you seek? Do you seek a logical, ordered mind or a creative one? Someone who wants to continually learn new things? Who challenges you with meaningful conversation? Someone who curls up with a good book and you?

What do you need from your partner Physically? Someone who is affectionate? Vegetarian? A competitive athlete or couch potato? What about appearance? How old? How tall? Wears suits or sweats?

What do you need from your partner Spiritually? To share your spiritual or religious beliefs? Shares your outlook of life? Someone who meditates? A traditional dancer who attends sweat lodges? Into sage and sweet grass? Or new-age crystals?

What do you need in your partner Culturally? Someone you take to pow-wows or longhouse? A carver or basket weaver? Someone who likes to socialize and mingle among crowds? Someone who likes quiet solitude? Who lives traditionally or with all the modern conveniences?

What do you need from your partner Emotionally? Someone who is wonderfully romantic or practical? Someone who stirs your passion? Who supports your goals and dreams? Not afraid to express or talk about feelings?

What do you need from your partner Sexually? Someone who likes frequent sex, or very little? Sexually creative or predictable? Sexually adventurous? Someone who likes to cuddle? Lights on or off? Throughout the day or only at night?

What do you need from your partner Financially? Someone frugal? Adventurous? Generous? Who is focused on career? Or takes time to smell the roses? Who wants a high-rise penthouse or a log cabin in the woods? Has to have the newest technology or enjoys simplicity? Spends what you have or saves every dime?

What do you need from your partner Family-Wise? Wants children? How many? How would they be raised? How would they be disciplined? How about extended family involvement?

Draw a Healthy Community

In this exercise, you will create an image that represents how you see a healthy community. To begin, you will have to determine in a visual way what a healthy community would look like to you, and then consider how you would create that image in a way that other people could interpret your vision.

In its simplest interpretation, you could draw a picture or series of pictures on a single piece of paper. Depending on what materials you have available, your creativity can be unlimited. For instance:

- Cut out images from magazines or newspapers that represent different elements of your vision. Glue them onto a poster board or large newsprint.
- Involve color. Use crayons, markers, or colored construction paper to reflect different emotions or natural elements.
- Be creative with string, yarn, tissue paper, buttons, toothpicks, popsicle sticks, beads, or any other materials you have on hand.
- Consider moving into three dimensions. Create something more like a sculpture than a painting.

Include any people or community elements that contribute to your vision of a healthy community:

- How will you represent families?
- How do you see people taking care of themselves or each other?
- How does nature fit into your healthy community?
- How could you represent concepts like love, respect, or balance?

This exercise can be done individually, as families, or in small groups. The participants can know each other and work together to identify a common vision of a healthy community. The participants may not know each other but they can discuss their various ideas about what makes a healthy community.

Following this activity, have the participants share with each other what their work represents. This can be an opportunity to facilitate a family or group discussion about the contributions that each person can make toward achieving the healthy community they envision.

Finding Balance

To prepare for this exercise, on a separate piece of paper draw a set of three circles in the shape of a bulls-eye: a large circle covering most of the page, a medium sized circle inside the first, and a smaller circle in the center of the first two, leaving plenty of space within each circle to write a few things down.

Next, consider the many things that you may be trying to find time for in your life. For instance:

- Work
- Taking care of home
- Raising children
- Spiritual practice
- Community responsibility
- Extended family
- Time for self
- Emotions
- Physical health
- Going to school/education
- Cultural practices
- Relationships in all directions
- Entertainment
- Proper nutrition
- Mental health
- Rest and relaxation
- Friendships
- Money and finances
- And anything else that you may be trying to find time for...

In this exercise, each layer of the circle represents the level of priority you place upon the items in that circle. The smallest circle will be for those things that are your highest priorities. The medium circle is for important things, but not the most important that you have placed in the center circle. The largest circle will be for those things that are of a lower priority to you.

1. Place the items from the suggested list, and any that you have added at the bottom of the list, into your circles where they match your sense of their priority in your life.
2. Upon completing the exercise, how balanced does your finished page look? Is one circle very lightly filled while another is extremely full?
3. Ask yourself, "Have I been living my life in a way that reflects the things I have written as my highest priorities?" And, "What changes do I need to make in my life so that I am living in a way that reflects my highest priorities?"