

Healthy Relationship/Healthy Marriage Idea Guide



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP/HEALTHY MARRIAGE IDEA GUIDE

There is no typical traditional or cultural way of teaching about becoming a couple, but there are some general principles many native people can identify.

For many, the traditional village was a group of inter-related families living together and helping to take care of each other. As a young person growing up in this community, there was an understanding that each young person would eventually find a mate outside of his/her family, clan, or village. Whether through arranged marriage or by choice, this served many useful purposes. It widened the gene pool, decreased the possibilities for war by connecting us as extended family to other communities around us, and increased our opportunities or areas for hunting, fishing, or gathering.

While role modeling was one of the primary mechanisms for teaching young people about healthy relationships, there were also many cultural practices in everyday life. For example, among some tribes of the Pacific Northwest, when a man finds a mate, he must spend four seasons in her village learning all he can about her family history, language, social practices, value systems, songs, medicines, spiritual ways, and so forth. At the end of those first four seasons, she returns with him to spend four seasons in his village, learning everything she can about him, his people, and their way of being. At the end of the eight seasons the couple must make a choice about which village will be their permanent home. They would then follow the ways of this village, keeping the cultural practices of this community intact. This helped assure a harmonious relationship between the couple. Many tribal cultures passed down numerous teachings, through story, about how a couple should behave and why. These stories were typically based on watching animals and helped to illustrate behaviors that might occur in a relationship. Stories of Mink might teach us about appropriate (or inappropriate) sexual behavior. Stories of Eagle might teach us about staying with our mates. Stories of Wolf could teach us about working together to raise a family. Stories of Raven might teach us what happens if we do not heed these teachings.

Unfortunately, where many tribal people or tribal communities became disconnected from these traditional teachings, they also became disconnected from the values and principles involved. These principles could provide valuable insight into developing and maintaining healthy and successful relationships today. The two agendas that follow provide examples of a four-hour workshop and a full-day workshop.

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4-Hour Agenda

Trainer Agenda

8:00 Welcome everyone to the workshop. Open in a culturally appropriate way. Allow for introductions where necessary. Begin with an icebreaker/energizer activity to gain focus, build energy and participation, and set the tone for the workshop.

8:15 Topic: What We've Learned

Begin with a large group discussion of the question, "Where and how did we learn about relationships?" Encourage participation from around the room and capture input on a flip chart. Discuss the *Characteristics of Life Experiences* (handout) and share real-life experiences. Individually, have everyone complete the *Trauma Web* (activity). As a large group, process some of the thoughts or feelings that come from the activity.

9:45 Break

10:00 Topic: Gender Differences

In a large group, lead a discussion about *Hunters and Gatherers* (handout) to assure that everyone understands the concept of gender difference affecting behavior. Breaking into small groups, have everyone discuss their own experiences of these gender difference impacts. Bring the groups back together and have each group share their experiences.

10:30 Topic: Healthy Conflict Resolution/Healthy Communication

Guide a large group discussion of *What is Conflict?* (handout), followed by *The Seven Fs of Conflict* (handout), and *Coyote Language* (activity). Moving into different small groups, have each group identify at least five other examples of Coyote Language happening around them. Bring the groups back together and have everyone share their examples. Finish the topic by sharing *Collaborative Conflict Resolution* (handout).

11:30 Topic: Summary and Homework

Check for questions or needed group discussion of everything covered today. Have the group discuss the characteristics of a healthy relationship. Have participants complete *Three Steps to Changing a Habit* (handout). Provide any other tips or information to be shared, including follow-up activities if you have any to present. Conclude by having everyone select one thing they can do differently during the remainder of the day to begin creating positive and proactive change.

12:00 Closing

Healthy Relationship/Healthy Marriage Idea Guide
4-Hour Agenda
Participant Agenda

8:00 Welcome
Introductions
Icebreaker

8:15 Topic: What We've Learned
Where and how did we learn about relationships?
Characteristics of Life Experiences (handout)
Trauma Web (activity)

9:45 Break

10:00 Topic: Gender Differences
Hunters and Gatherers (handout)

10:30 Topic: Healthy Conflict Resolution/Healthy Communication
What is Conflict? (handout)
The Seven Fs of Conflict (handout)
Coyote Language (activity)
Collaborative Conflict Resolution (handout)

11:30 Topic: Summary and Homework
Three Steps to Changing a Habit (handout)

12:00 Closing

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Full-day Agenda

Trainer Agenda

9:00 Welcome everyone to the workshop. Open in a culturally appropriate way. Allow for introductions where necessary. Begin with an icebreaker/energizer activity to gain focus, build energy and participation, and set the tone for the workshop.

9:15 Topic: What We've Learned

Begin with a large group discussion of the question, "Where and how did we learn about relationships?" Encourage participation from around the room and capture input on a flip chart. Discuss the *Characteristics of Life Experiences* (handout), sharing real-life experiences of the behaviors. Individually, have everyone complete the *Trauma Web* (activity). As a group, process the thoughts or feelings that come from the activity.

10:45 Break

11:00 Topic: Gender Differences

In a large group, lead a discussion about *Hunters and Gatherers* (handout) to assure that everyone understands the concept of gender difference affecting behavior. Breaking into small groups, have everyone discuss their own experiences with these gender difference impacts. Bring the room back together and have groups check in with each other about these experiences. As a large group, review and discuss *Giving Effective Feedback* (handout).

12:00 Lunch

1:30 Topic: Healthy Conflict Resolution

Begin with a discussion about the different causes of conflict with *What is Conflict?* (handout). Then discuss various habits we bring into conflict as *The Seven Fs of Conflict* (handout). Guide participants as they individually complete the questionnaire *Your Behavior During Conflict* (activity). Upon completing the activity, discuss the results as a group. Complete the topic by sharing *Collaborative Conflict Resolution* (handout).

2:30 Topic: Healthy Communication

Open the topic with discussion of *Coyote Language* (activity). Moving into different small groups, have each group identify at least five other examples of Coyote Language happening around them. Bring the groups back together and have everyone share their examples. Individually, have participants complete *Listening Self-evaluation* (activity) and discuss their results with the person next to them. As a large group, review the *Six Words for Clear Communication* (handout).

3:15 Break

3:30 Topic: Being A Couple

Tape flip chart pages around the room labeled at the top with the eight topics of the *Relationship Roadmap* (activity). Divide the group into smaller groups of 4-6 people each. Have each group

brainstorm at each of the lists, discussing the topic and writing their answers for 3-5 minutes before moving to the next page. After each group has had a turn at each list, have everyone return to their seats and as a large group, review and discuss the lists that were created. Encourage participants to do a more detailed personal version of the exercise at home. Have the group discuss the characteristics of a healthy relationship.

4:30 Topic: Life in Balance

Have everyone complete *Finding Balance* (activity) individually. As a group, discuss where different people placed their different priorities and why. To complete the day have people individually complete *Three Steps to Changing a Habit* (handout) as homework to take with them.

5:00 Closing

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Full-day Agenda Participant Agenda

- 9:00** Welcome
Introductions
Icebreaker
- 9:15** Topic: What We've Learned
Where and how did we learn about relationships?
Characteristics of Life Experiences (handout)
Trauma Web (activity)
- 10:45** Break
- 11:00** Topic: Gender Differences
Hunters and Gatherers (handout)
Giving Effective Feedback (handout)
- 12:00** Lunch
- 1:30** Topic: Healthy Conflict Resolution
What is Conflict? (handout)
The Seven Fs of Conflict (handout)
Your Behavior During Conflict (activity)
Collaborative Conflict Resolution (handout)
- 2:30** Topic: Healthy Communication
Coyote Language (activity)
Listening Self-evaluation (activity)
Six Words for Clear Communication (handout)
- 3:00** Break
- 3:30** Topic: Being A Couple
Relationship Roadmap (activity)
- 4:30** Topic: Life in Balance
Finding Balance (activity)
Three Steps to Changing a Habit (handout)
- 5:00** Closing