



## March 2009 Webinar Transcript

### Developing Culturally Relevant Relationship and Marriage Education Curricula for Native American Populations

Moderator: Sarah Schappert

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2:00 pm CT

**Operator:** Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for standing by. Welcome to the IFC International - The National Healthy Marriage Resource Center March 2009 Webinar.

During this presentation, participants are in a listen-only mode. You will have a question and answer session via the webinar. If at any time during this conference you need to reach an operator, please press the star followed by the zero.

As a reminder, today's conference is being recorded on Wednesday, March 18, 2009.

I now have the pleasure of turning the conference over to Sarah Schappert, Family Preservation Program Specialist. Please go ahead, Ma'am.

**Sarah Schappert:** Hello everyone. Many of you know me as your program specialist. My name's Sarah Schappert. I am the Administration for Native American Preservation program specialist.

I'd like to welcome all of you to the webinar today. This webinar is being hosted by the National Marriage Resource Center and the Administration for Native Americans. We have grantees on the call from ANA, the Office of Family Assistance and Children's Bureau.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to our presenters today, Mary Lee Crowe, Steve Racine and Maynard Kicking Woman. We also have Dan McFadyean from the Blackfeet Nation, and Gordon and Pam James from the Native Wellness Institute.

Before we start the webinar, I wanted to let you know that the Resource Center has been working on for us that should be coming out in mid-April which is the Native American Research Brief on Native American families.

I've been asked to let you know that if you're not on their LISTSERV and would like to be notified when that does come out, that you should email [Info@HealthyMarriageInfo.org](mailto:Info@HealthyMarriageInfo.org) to subscribe to their LISTSERV. I, myself, am looking forward to that coming out and learning more about the research brief.

Today we're going to be conducting a webinar. This webinar has been developed because of the need that we have seen of our grantees not being able to find some culturally appropriate curricula and educational materials out there for them to use in conducting their family preservation and healthy marriage grants.

We decided to conduct this webinar today to help you all out with either developing curricula that meets your community's needs, adapting curricula or coming up with different cultural activities to include in your project that works for your community.

Today the objectives for the webinar are the following. We are going to discuss the need for relationship

curricula that are culturally relevant to Native American populations. Discuss elements of a healthy relationship curriculum specifically developed for the Native American Population. Also, discuss strategies for adapting already existing healthy relationship and marriage curricula to resound more strongly with Native American couples in our communities.

I'm going to be introducing the presenters. After they speak, we will have a question and answer session after each presenter where you'll be able to type in your questions for them. Then towards the end of the webinar, I will also answer some questions.

Before they tell you how you can type in the questions, I just wanted to let you know that I am appreciative of all of you participating and hope you enjoy the webinar.

**Operator:** Thank you Sarah. Good afternoon everyone. I would like to direct your attention to the demonstration slide currently displayed on your screen. You should find the questions and answers pane designated by the letters Q and A located at the top of your screen.

You can either click on that portion of the menu bar to open the pane or you can open and then drag the pane off the menu bar to display it as a standalone box.

To ask a question this afternoon we request that you type your question into the box here. Then click Ask. You will automatically receive a reply thanking you for the question and letting you know that your question has been forwarded to the facilitator.

This automatic reply allows us to free up your question and answer pane, which then enables you to ask another question if you choose. Sarah?

**Sarah Schappert:** I would like to introduce Mary Lee Crowe. She's a project coordinator for the Blackfeet Nation Healthy Marriage Project, one of our ANA grantees. She is joined today by her colleague, Steve Racine, lead trainer for the Healthy Marriage Project, Maynard Kicking Woman, the cultural coordinator for Blackfeet Manpower, and Dan McFadyean, the deputy director for the Blackfeet Manpower.

Today Mary Lee will discuss how her program has inserted culturally relevant themes and activities into an existing mainstream healthy marriage curriculum titled Love's Cradle so that the participants relate better to the information.

Mary Lee was born and raised on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana. She was a case manager for the Blackfeet Manpower program, an organization that provides education, training and social services to the Blackfeet Nation. She then assumed her current position as project coordinator for the Healthy Marriage Project which is run by the Blackfeet Manpower program.

Mary Lee, you can now present.

**Mary Lee Crow:** Good morning. Thank you for the introduction. I am turning the phone over to Dan McFadyean right now for the introduction.

**Dan McFadyean:** Good morning everybody. My name is Dan McFadyean. I'm the deputy director of Manpower. Today we have our project coordinator for the Siksika Healthy Marriage. That is Mary Lee Crow. Joining me also will be our lead trainer of the Siksika Healthy Marriage project, Mr. Steve Racine. Our cultural coordinator, Mr. Maynard Kicking Woman is not available.

**Mary Lee Crowe:** We begin with our introduction, importance of spirituality to the Native American family. Spirituality is historically at the heart of the (Pacani) Blackfoot culture. The early white men were impressed with the deep and sincere spirituality of the Native people.

Today as we attempt to rebuild our Native societies, we see that spiritual aspect of our ancient cultures is the most important. The tragic events we read and hear about on the news: shootings, child abductions, beatings were not a part of our traditional cultures. We have always been a spiritual people and we will continue with our spirituality.

Siksika Healthy Marriage classes begin with our cultural coordinator with sweet grass and spiritual guidance in a Blackfeet language. Significance of our culture in a Siksika Healthy Love's Cradle curriculum, we have it to promote family unity. We have been teaching our traditional Blackfeet ways.

**Dan McFadyean:** We are going to have an overview of our clients. The Blackfeet Manpower operate a one-stop facility on our reservation. Our reservation is approximately 60 by 70 miles. It contains about 1.5 million acres. Thus we have reservation communities scattered throughout the reservation.

Then we took a look, we're going to talk briefly about modifying the learning material. Mary or Steve will talk about how we modified the material because right from the onset, the material that we started with did not duplicate or represent the lives of our Blackfeet people.

From day one, we realized that we had to modify the curriculum so our people would get more out of it. Some of the comments they had were, "It just doesn't represent us."

Mary will talk about how we modified the materials. The materials did not represent Native communities. They were more of an Ozzie and Harriet type of family structure -- completely different than what we have. We did not find success so we modified it. Then we'll go back over our accomplishments.

Who were our clients on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation? Our clients for this project, we partnered with the Manpower program. We have the federal TANF and that is for all family members when everybody is 100%

enrolled in our project.

We also have a companion grant where a lot of our people do not meet the quarter blood quantum that our tribe has. They're called descendants.

In working with this population in the introduction of this curriculum, we encountered many obstacles. We feel other reservations probably are encountering these obstacles as well. In many rural environments like ours, we did not have adequate building space. So what we're building is to hold meetings and larger groups.

We just have to realize that we did have obstacles. Mary and her crew did an excellent job of planning. The way we overcame our obstacles is through partnership building in the community. We needed a large building space to hold large meetings. We're talking about working with groups of 25 couples and beyond. When we have our group meeting, we have had as many as 130 couples.

We really analyzed our obstacles. We went into the community, explained what we were doing and most of our other tribal programs and our state county programs will meet you with open arms once they know what you're trying to do.

Another obstacle we had is in this community, as with any other communities, is there is an issue with adequate childcare. It was really difficult for us to work with the families when their childcare was so unpredictable. We eventually asked for and received some additional money from our director. We were able to build our own fee for - not a fee for service childcare. But we would provide childcare when we were meeting with our families.

The luxury of working with an agency like ours to participate in the welfare programs that we have on the Blackfeet Reservation, each single parent is required to do 20 hours of work-like activity. Each couple is required to do 30 hours.

We created an internal partnership because if we were to expect our single parents to work on their GED and to look for work, it just really wasn't in the cards. It wasn't possible for us to make these connections. We went and petitioned our welfare TANF program. They accepted the hours that they were involved and enrolled in and actively engaged in our Siksika Healthy Marriage as work-like activities.

Then to top it off, we also worked with our clients and the local community college where they reviewed the curriculum that was developed. Each participant received 2.5 hours of continuing educational requirements.

So we were working internally and externally to overcome our obstacles. I believe they did a very beautiful job because we are successful in delivering the project.

You can change the slide. I'm going to hand this over to our trainer Steve Racine, and he will go over the

slides and explain what each one means to you.

**Steve Racine:** Hi. This is Steve Racine. I'm the lead trainer. I teach all the classes that - in the curriculum - teaching the curriculum.

What we do is we have our cultural coordinator come in. I do the first hour of teaching the curriculum. Dan mentioned earlier that we did modify. Not just any of the curriculums but parts that didn't fit within our culture. We still stay focused on communication and that part of the curriculum.

What we do is the first hour is curriculum with the married couples. Then we go with our cultural coordinator. First let me go through the slides here real quick. We have a lady that built an arrow quill. That's part of the second half of every class. They do projects and work together as a couple.

Next is a lady who built a pouch. Now we have the kids on the bottom here. What we do is we have family picnics and family outings. This is up in Glacier National Park right next to the reservation on one of our picnics.

The one here is an interesting story. These couples here actually rode horseback 26 miles round trip to the community college where we have our classes, and participated in the class. We have one building the pouch and the other is building a drum. The interesting part of the story is that they ride horse about 26 miles round trip to come to our class.

What we do is we have a focus group. The focus group is a structured process that we have. It's a format that our grant writer from the University of New Mexico sends.

It is kind of a scientific format that she puts into the computer. She sends us the questions to find out how our couples are and how everything's going in the class. She sends us questions to ask and then she has probes if the questions - go into details on each. We did have elders and community couples that participate in that.

Interaction in the classroom, that's one thing I want to talk about, is we had a video. It's written in a curriculum for the video. We did take that part out of it because it really didn't focus and relate to the Native couples. A lot of them made comments at first when they watched the video.

There are a lot of things different with Native couples and couples off the reservation. So it wasn't really accurate and it didn't fit us. That's one thing we modified in there.

One thing we talk about in the beginning of each class is we talk about bringing the cultural aspect into it, we have a talking stick. What we do there is decorate it in a Native America way with an eagle feather.

One of the most important things we stress in this curriculum is respect. We do talk about the eagle feather

and we ask that whoever holds the talking stick in class that they do respect that person talking.

It goes with them. It also goes in when we break the couples down in their communication to talk about their communication. Part of it is that they do - respect is the main thing that we bring out into the class is because you have to have the respect part of it.

For language, we have our cultural coordinator that comes in. We have a two hour class each session. What he does is he hands out pamphlets and stuff. He talks about the basic Blackfeet language and goes through and helps the couple there.

I would like to talk about conflict management. In doing these classes, we did have some problems with conflicts because in any time you bring your married couples in or your couples that are stressed and things that happen in class. You're going to run into some conflict.

We did have to ask to remove them from the class because of the conflict part of it. So there are some conflicts that do happen in our classes.

Traditional arts like drum making. We feel that that is one of the most important parts of our culture. It's because our cultural coordinator quoting what he says is, "The drum is the heartbeat of the Blackfeet Nation." So that's one thing that we've implemented. We try to do this first with all the guys and the ladies that would like are to attend our drum making class.

One thing we stress there is that we have the couples work together. We believe that by working together in their Native projects that it brings unity and helps them relate to the stuff that they've learned in class. It ties together when they get to work on a project together.

One thing we did do is have a powwow. This year was our second annual powwow. The powwow is for the couples that participated and the clients with Manpower. We had a (spit) game. That's a cultural game that we play here on the reservation. That again is our second annual.

We've had several family outings. What we do is have picnics, different activities that we plan with the couples that come through the curriculum. They come through for 12 weeks. During that time we have one focus group. Then we have one family outing that they get to come and enjoy the weather, get out and have a cookout and do things for the couple as a family.

We had three Healthy Marriage Day events. What we do is get the couples together. The Blackfeet tribe has just passed a resolution declaring February 14th is our national or our tribal Healthy Marriage Day that is on Valentine's Day, of course. We recognize that hereby resolution passed by the Blackfeet tribe is that is our Healthy Marriage Day and for families and couples.

What we usually do is have them get together. We bring in elders that have been married for years. This year we had a couple that's been married 71 years that come in and was our guest speaker. We have different elders that come in and talk about how they managed. We have the director come in talking about some of the skills that they use but that's directed to our couples for that day.

We've had two Fatherhood Day events. What we do is we try to focus on the dads and responsibility in the family. We invite all the dads in and they get a chance to talk about some of the things that they face stresses and those types of things.

All these events are documented on film. We have films on both those days.

I'll turn it back over here to Dan to talk about arts and crafts.

**Dan McFadyean:** This is also a way for us to connect them to the International Traditional Game Society because last month they took arts and crafts that were made by our Healthy - Siksika Healthy Marriage participants to a Made in Montana show in Kentucky.

This is the way we've taken this project from Healthy Marriage and we've integrated it in through our one-stop opportunity, keeping in mind regardless if they're Siksika Healthy Marriage trainers or not, our overall goal and underpinning of all of our work is to prepare individuals to be free from TANF, domestic violence. It's our theory that if we can do these three and have a healthy marriage, we eventually will reduce the number of children that are coming at an alarming rate on the reservation and being put towards foster care. When we have a happy family and they're making money, we believe that, that is some of the underpinnings that we all in America need to look at.

So we were very successful in that we only introduced them in the Siksika Healthy Marriage to the arts of crafts. Another division of the Manpower connected them to the International Traditional Game Society for an economic opportunity.

We received a supplemental grant. One thing that I am always cautious about from my 30 years of working in Head Start in the Seattle market is the male involvement in the lives of children because a lot of times, the fathers are not present. There's another very important individual in the life of these children. In our culture, it was uncles' and aunts' responsibility to expose and to mentor the children.

When our society is coming out of a -- for lack of a better term -- a holocaust, we have to figure ways to replace uncles and aunts. The Siksika Healthy Marriage was a good opportunity for us.

We also had youth campouts that we coordinated through our other Manpower programs. The parents with children were invited to a traditional campout that was put on by Manpower as another example of partnership.

We had a great success with the summer kickoff barbeque. At the barbeque, we had little mini-workshops on healthy marriage and Siksika Healthy Marriage curriculum and what it means to it. These are all ways - non-traditional ways of marketing to our Indian people and Indiana country.

The other thing that we learned, it is always good to have some form of food with your activities. The attendants, keeping in mind all of our clients the first and second year were on TANF. It is a tough job to live just on less than \$500 so we provided food. It was very successful.

On accomplishments we had 130 couples complete our curriculum. Out of that we had 25 couples that had self-identified or were identified by Mary and her staff and they have attended and completed the trainer model.

For those of you who that are just getting into this, this is what we call our peer-to-peer transfer of knowledge. It would behoove everybody that's not familiar with peer-to-peer work that they look at this because this is the brilliance of this whole ANA grant. We're taking people that may live together in a housing project or a rural part of the reservation and training them.

We are actually saturating the community with this curriculum on a much larger basis. When they see a healthy couple in Heart Butte, Montana and they're one of our trainers, they're modeling appropriate behavior for the community and it's been very successful using peer-to-peer.

Briefly summarizing our partnerships, most of all our biggest partnership was with our tribal council and our tribal program, the Blackfeet Manpower. Additional partnerships were created out of necessity for space and also for inclusion is that we work within the school districts on a reservation, we have two of them, two separate districts.

They provided us with not only referrals but a place to work with. We have a huge partnership with our local Housing Authority and the Crystal Creek Treatment Center. Another thing that is looking like sustainability but George and I have elected not to pursue this as we talk right now the Department of Corrections for the State of Montana has contacted Mary Lee and they want to use the curriculum with Native Americans that are in prerelease. All of these are Tier 3 felons that have been sent to prison, Federal or State for domestic violence.

This is a growth area that we didn't even realize. But if we all think about this, domestic abuse is rampant throughout the United States not only on the reservation. So we're also building partnerships at the state level. This was an example of our trainer making a presentation at a domestic violence seminar. The State Department of Corrections was there and they started pursuing us.

Accomplishments, we've had four marriage proposals during our activities. We've had one marriage. We have received state, local, tribal, even international recognition. Our tribal brothers to the north in Canada have requested some free TA from Mary and her staff to see if they could start offering this because it is spreading

like wildfire. It's very positive. It is amazing what happens when this curriculum is implemented reservation wide.

Once again I always reflect on importance of having your tribal council or your unit or local government supporting you. Our other accomplishments, I believe as a deputy director, we were able to integrate this in a seamless fashion and our end goal is employment.

Once again we had the father and son traditional bow making. If I was to recommend anything, I would put male involvement because of the fact that we have a tendency to alienate the person that's actually providing the male involvement in the roles of the children. All of our couples participated in our cultural - if they have a desire to learn their language, as a partnership with Manpower, we have that capabilities where we introduce them to their language at the beginner level. We can take them all the way up as they desire on a self-directed computer program or assistance from our cultural coordinator.

Arts and crafts were a great way for our couples to really get hands on take their curriculum and work together. A lot of the couples were not working together prior to the curriculum. We have involvement in traditional games. Out of all this we feel that we are reinforcing the values of the Blackfeet Nation of long ago.

I'm going to turn this over to Mary Lee Crowe to provide the ending remarks, and you can switch the slide. Thank you.

**Mary Lee Crowe:** In conclusion of our presentation we feel that the spirituality aspect of our training has brought our couples and their families closer together. Our clients have written many thank you letters. We also have videos where each couple has stood up and said that they would not be together today if they had not attended our Siksika Healthy Marriage classes.

The curriculum has provided skills to build a strong couple and family foundation. Adding the Blackfeet culture to the Love's Cradle curriculum has given our clients the opportunity to learn about the importance of their language, our traditional values, which they are, historical trauma and the effects it has carried throughout the generations, and relationship skills that will make them a family stronger unit and we thank you all.

**Operator:** Miss (Schappert) we'll turn it back to you, if you'd like to field any questions from the webinar.

**Sarah Schappert:** Thank you Mary Lee, Dan, Steve, and all of you for your presentations. It's always exciting to hear everything that our grantees are doing. I am excited to see what you guys do in the next couple years as your project continues.

Mary Lee's email address is up on the PowerPoint slide if you want to email her any questions. We have received one question so far for Mary Lee. This is from (Ellen). She wants to know, how many hours does your program present when they're doing the curriculum? Then how many hours are needed in order for a

participant to be considered completing the program?

**Mary Lee Crowe:** How many hours?

**Man:** Fourteen.

**Mary Lee Crowe:** Fourteen sessions. They're two hours a session. In order for them to get their work activity hours they have to complete 120 hours if they're couple.

**Susan Schappert:** I don't think that there are any other questions at this time. Though there might be more questions for you guys towards the end of the webinar. So at this time I'm going to pass it over to Pam and Gordon James for their presentation.

Gordon James is going to be presenting. He's the curriculum developer for the Native Wellness Institute's Leading the Next Generation Healthy Relationships curriculum. That was developed utilizing ANA funds.

Their project ended September 29 of 2008. They currently have another project going on with ANA that is related to youth leadership. Gordon is going to discuss how they went about developing the curriculum. Why they identified this need for native communities. If you want to take over Gordon, you can do so.

Gordon James: Thank you very much Sarah and good morning or good afternoon depending on where folks are listening from. Again my name is Gordon James. Not only am I the curriculum developer working with the Native Wellness Institute, I'm also am on the Board of Directors for the Native Wellness Institute.

The Leading the Next Generation Healthy Relationships curriculum was actually created from some earlier work developed by Pam and I in writing a book, "Coming Together in a Good Way in Native Past to Finding Love." It's a book that we wrote in 1999 and we had for some time before that been providing training and workshops at conferences and in other venues on different aspects of healthy relationships.

It coalesced at the urging of some the folks who were familiar with our work. We should be able to share this with more people. As we're looking a few years back, if you can transition to Slide 3.

In 2004 we were actually discussing at the Native Wellness Institute the need for much more of this healthy relationship teaching to be available particularly from a cultural perspective for the many native communities we were working in.

In 2004 the Institute applied for and received a one year funding to do some concept development on the idea of could there be a curriculum, is there enough cultural resources available towards it, how we would form it in a way that would allow folks to be able to pick it up and use as a functional tool. Based on what we created during that one year development of the concept, we applied for and received funding for a three year grant

beginning in October of 2005.

Three parts to that curriculum development in the first year we brought in the assistance of many of our Board, our advisors to the Institute, a number of native trainers from across the country who were working in areas of wellness and healthy relationship building, an advisory circle to assist us in the process which included elders trainers and a variety of tribal leaders from across the country, so they could provide us some meaningful input as to what are those healthy relationship lessons that we used pass down from one generation to the next.

Our concept of course, is how do we create a curriculum that could cross both geographic boundaries? What are the lessons that we're hearing from all those directions that we could start to apply as a curriculum that many different tribal groups, tribal individuals and families could pick up and say, "Yeah, I know what that means. That makes sense to me and it fits for what I know of myself, and my culture and my community."

So in creating the project we're recognizing that there is this long history, cultural conflicts, oppression, discrimination, lots of things which disrupted the traditional cultured lifestyle, the relationships of many of our native people.

If we want to think of it in a very simple example of the old village setting where an older generation was passing down to each of the generations that followed, all of these lessons about how to have a healthy relationship, how to be a healthy person, how to have a healthy community.

Many factors, which of course all of our tribal communities are clearly aware of, disrupted that process. A number of things were breaking down how those lessons get passed on and contributing to a number of dysfunctional behaviors that start to intrude into our community and continue to throw all of that out of balance.

As we start to look at the curriculum itself it's divided into eight chapters. Each of the chapters has a consistent format in the way that it's put together. At the beginning of each chapter we're going to talk about lesson topics, what's actually going to be happening in that chapter?

In Chapter 1 this is really the basic set up, the foundation for any community, any group of people that are going to be working with this curriculum. We're trying to set the tone for what's going to happen during the next several sessions. It's a general introduction to the project, what's going to happen during the training.

There is some intent in the process not only to get all of these lessons together into one place with a variety of different ways to express them in your community. There's also an opportunity in each community for everybody who's using this curriculum to apply it distinctly in ways that will fit their own community better.

So there's an opportunity to make some modifications. We built that into the process. We'll talk a little bit more about that as we go through the curriculum. We want to talk about this overall concept, what is native wellness. Because if we've gone through so many families, so many generations, so many communities that

are struggling to even survive much less thrive, we really have to start with the basics of understanding how to I get back to that place where I can really grow? Of course what is a healthy relationship?

Chapter 1 also gives an opportunity to review each of the chapters that are going to be coming up, so that all of our participants, individuals, couples can see how that fits into their needs.

Each chapter also has specific learning objectives included. For instance here in Chapter 1, we're looking at understanding the reasons why the program's being offered in this community. It's worded that way specifically. Again how are we tailoring it at the local level? So the folks who are actually providing the training at the local level can talk about the needs that they're identifying in the community they're serving.

What are the benefits you can receive by participating in this program? Not only in terms of the benefits will you receive by learning the material in the curriculum and putting into practice in your relationship. Also, this is the opportunity for the folks at the local level to talk about other things that can be available to support people in that community as they work towards their own healthy relationships. Of course, learning what's going to be expected of the participants as they go through the course.

Okay. Now, throughout all of this we wanted to make sure not only that our curriculum was culturally relevant to the communities that we're serving. Then we'll also be exploring through this how the communities themselves can take elements of their own teachings, their own lessons, their own stories, their own activities, and incorporate them in some places in place of what's already contained in the curriculum.

So it's not necessarily a one size fits all. It's a structure that people can use to begin with, but they can also begin to tailor to better fit how they choose to serve in their own communities.

In Chapter 2 we're starting the actual real meaningful work of the curriculum. Our chapter two begins with some discussion about historic trauma, drama, and wellness. We start with this topic because when we spoke of those disruptions to the lifestyle, to the communities, to the things that are breaking apart our communities and causing dysfunction.

If we're not able to adequately begin to bring people's awareness up and to open folks up to the possibility that we can change, we can improve, we can have a better future and healthier relationships, we're going to continue to struggle. So we start with this chapter.

We want to consider how our life experiences are affecting our behavior; we're instilling habits in ourselves. We're instilling habits in our children through what's happening in daily life. So we want to explore what that is and to understand that the ways that we're behaving don't necessarily equal who we are. It's just how we've learned to behave at this time. It gives us an opportunity to look at something different.

We want to look at what are the roots of historic traumas that we're all facing as Native people in terms of how

that experience is played out across the country. It can be distinctly different from one community to another. This is a great opportunity not only for us to talk about those things collectively as a community nationally. Also, what were the specific kinds of impacts that happen in our own communities and in our families, in our own personal histories?

We also explore the multi generational effects of unresolved trauma because we've learned certainly that when traumatic experiences happen our behavior can change. Sometimes that behavior change causes more problems in our relationships and in our own lives. So we to explore how that happens and what we can do as a result, so we get to learn that we can change our own behavior. Next slide please.

Learning objectives, again consistent from one chapter to the next. We want to understand our behavior. We want to recognize the contributing roots that have come out of past that can affect us. Then again, learning some tools so that we can affect the changes we want to see happening in our personal behavior. Next slide please.

We're going to include some definitions in every chapter, things that we're going to look at a little more intimately in that chapter. What are our habits, and how do we recognize what our habits are? How has trauma affected our lives?

In this particular chapter, the drama that comes from that. How we're acting the learned behaviors and how that continues to play a role in what happens in our lives, as well as being able to recognize how multigenerational trauma affects us.

We have a number of different handouts, activities, group discussions, worksheets, individual activities, a number of things that help us to explore in every one of these chapters. This particular handout is an opportunity for an individual, a couple, or even groups who start to explore what are those things that have affected their lives. How do they see that impacting their behavior?

We would even break this down in other activities in this section to explore what are the varieties of behaviors that we see happening in the people around us as a result of experiencing these kinds of traumas and perhaps not fully healing from them.

It's going to have an impact on the relationships we have with our self, with our partner, with our family, with our community, with all things. It's going to impact our mind, our body, our spirit, our emotions, our relationship to the earth and the world around us. If we don't get these back into a proper balance and harmony it's going to continue to affect us with less than healthy relationships. Next slide please.

Our Chapter 3, what we term Hunters and Gatherers, is a chapter that talks about gender differences. Of course we begin with the lesson topics. In this arena what we're looking at is that in tradition many of our communities taught that there were different roles, responsibilities, different abilities that men and women had,

not to say that men and women had. Not to say that men and women one was either better or worse than the other. But it recognized that we simply had different strengths in general.

Now from one individual to the next of course there's always going to be a few exceptions. If we start to explore what those strengths and differences were, those lessons got passed down in a number of different teachings through the generations. So in our lesson topics we would be exploring that a healthy and successful village and family recognize that there were differing roles, that there was balance and respect for those roles.

We want to explore how the breakdown of the traditional family system broke down those teachings as well. So we didn't understand them as great as we moved into our modern families. It also wants to explore how do we recapture and honor those values in meaningful ways today? Next slide please.

The learning objectives for the chapter continue to build on those gender differences of hunters and gatherers, increasing our understanding, and regaining that sense of balancing, examining these traditional teachings stopped being passed down as well as how do we start to incorporate more elements of them into our modern relationships? The next page please.

Definitions that we start to cover in the chapter: Because we're wanting to build on this concept of resilience, not only can we face these difficulties, but we have the ability passed down through generations of surviving to be able to take the lessons from that and continue to grow and thrive forward. Next slide please.

Another example of the kind of handout used in this material; how are we starting to look at creating some concept of balance and wholeness as an individual family community. Next slide please.

Chapter 4 is a discussion about healthy conflict resolution. Again following a similar pattern of structure, but our topics and our purpose in having Healthy Conflict Resolution as Chapter 4, we needed to be able to discuss some of those elements of historic trauma first. Get that out of the way, and then we're going to be able to move into Healthy Conflict.

We have Chapter 5 discussing healthy communication, but it's important that we put this before the healthy communication, because if we can't resolve the issues of conflict, we're not going to be able to get into the healthy communication. Next slide please.

Again learning objectives about healthy conflict, getting insights into our current behavior, recognizing that we have habits in how we deal with conflict, learning some culturally and traditionally appropriate approaches as well as practicing some steps for successful conflict resolution. Next slide.

We're also going to explore some different concepts of what exactly is conflict. How does it play its role in our perception? What does it mean to actually achieve resolution? Next slide.

In the different ways we can look at exploring what it means to be in conflict, here's one example out of the curriculum: Seven Different Habits That We Can Develop in Times of Conflict.

We can have different habits depending on who we're in conflict with. We start to explore those at the individual level and allow people a chance to figure out how it has impacted so many different areas of their lives, whether it's in the workplace, community or their families. Next slide.

Chapter 5 brings us to discussion of healthy communications. We've already started to address the historic trauma, gender differences and started to resolve some elements of conflict.

Now it's an opportunity to move forward, to be able to discuss things, to open up and share some intimacy about who we are, how we think, and how we feel. We start with our lesson topics -- next slide please -- as well as discussing some learning objectives. How do we recognize what our own habits are in communications? How do we recognize the difference between effective and ineffective communication as well as a lot of opportunities in this chapter to practice effective communication skills? Next slide.

A couple of really important concepts we'll bring out here are, for instance, Coyote language, when we start to talk about a message that is intentionally indirect or unclear. Sometimes people can use Coyote language to mask the true intent of their communication as well as let's explore what it means to get into healthy communications. What are all the different channels for healthy communication? Chapter 6; next slide please.

Coming Together as a Couple: building on the chapters before, this is how do you bring two people together and everything that they bring with them; all of that past history, all the experience and their own habits? What are the lessons that they brought into a relationship? How do you combine the priorities of two people into one? What are some traditional approaches that we can build on that cultural basis? How do we continue to grow forward together? Next slide please.

Then we look at the learning objective; what perspectives a person brought with them into the relationship and where is the relationship now?

A number of different tools that you could analyze how you feel that you're doing, and if you're working as part of a couple, your partner can do the same exercises that would give you some great opportunities to talk about what your different thoughts and feelings are as you examine where your relationship is now, as well as there are some great tools included in the chapter for moving forward. Next slide please.

More examples of some of the handouts we use. Again, this is certainly a serious matter in many ways, but we don't want to be all about seriousness. We're going to have fun. We have to enjoy the opportunity to learn, grow and become more.

Here's an example of a fun way that we can approach this idea. When we enter into many of our relationships,

we really aren't asking enough questions to understand. Who is this person that I'm even getting into a relationship with? It's a funny way for us to start exploring what people's ideas are that they bring into the relationship, as well as exploring some of the funny habits out of the past that have brought the relationships we've already experienced.

The next slide is a much more serious and contemplative opportunity for either an individual, couple or group to start discussing different aspects of putting a relationship of two people together. What do you want from your partner intellectually, physically, spiritually, culturally, emotionally, sexually, financially, and family-wise?

If you're a part of an existing couple, this gives each individual an opportunity to do some writing on this exercise and then explore together what the differences and similarities are.

If you're a single person, not in a relationship, it gives you a better opportunity to look at the kind of person you might be hoping to find. Next slide please.

Chapter 7: Better Sex. It's clear from a lot of the statistics that are out there that a huge percentage of relationships struggle in terms of sex and finances. It's also supposedly one of the leading causes for a lot of relationships to break up.

We wanted to make sure that we start to talk about this not from a titillating standpoint, but that there used to be lessons passed down on the sexual side of our relationships in that old village. We want to explore these topics. Where did you learn about sex? How is that going to play a role in where you are in your relationship now?

Then we get into some real understanding the basics of sex, some actual physical considerations and some traditional approaches to teaching about it. How are those teachings passed down in that old village setting as well as, how do we improve on that aspect of our relationship right now?

We're going to explore our current knowledge and beliefs. We're going to improve our understanding of what healthy sex is as well as compare that to how we behave right now and what kind of improvements we can include.

This is the importance of the discussion of intimacy and sexuality. A lot of the modern messages around sex and sexuality are very blatant. We see it in billboards, TV, movies and radio, but in social settings we see a lot of hesitance. We see a lot of mixed messages about being able to talk openly about elements of sex, sexuality and intimacy.

We really want to make sure that in this chapter we're giving people that opportunity to once again learn to become comfortable in their own thoughts about sex and sexuality, but also to be able to engage in a comfortable way with their partner so they can improve on the healthiness of that part of the relationship.

We're not thinking only in terms of the physical part of that sexual relationship, but also in terms of how we build intimacy. So we'll have a number of exercises in this chapter that build on that understanding of the deeper emotional elements of what a sexual relationship entails.

In Chapter 8 we're trying to summarize a lot of the things that we've been covering so far. Living in Balance: Creating the Relationship You Want. This is certainly an important traditional principle that many of our cultures share, though in this particular instance, how do we apply those lessons to the balance that we want in a healthy relationship? What are the priorities I was taught growing up? What am I trying to balance today? What are my cultural values around living in balance?

When we talk cultural values, certainly we can be talking about both the cultural values from the tribal historic background that we bring, but also cultural values in terms of the family culture that you grew up in. What lessons did they teach you? Were those lessons helping you or not? As well as we want to cover a number of different tools for monitoring how we're balancing these things.

The Learning Objectives. What are the sources for the current priorities you live by? How do you analyze those priorities to find a sense of balance and how can you actually create a plan to better balance moving forward from this point?

We're going to spend a good chunk of time in this chapter talking about this sense of purpose. Why are you here? What is it that you're meant to accomplish in this life?

To understand wisdom and how we can start to apply more of our ability to gain wisdom to our approach, to our healthy relationships and again, to build more elements of balance into who and how we are in those relationships.

Those relationships can be in any direction. Many of the lessons involved in this curriculum are very applicable to a healthy couple's relationship, but a lot of the lessons you'll find in here can also be applied to the many other relationships in our lives, whether it's as parents, families, extended families, in the social settings of our communities and workplaces. Next slide please.

An example of the kind of information that we're covering during this chapter and what are those different gifts that we want to build upon? The gift of mind, including things like a joy for learning, creativity or goal setting.

How do we look at our physical health, building in proper rest and nutrition and physical affection? What does that mean?

What are the elements that affect our spirit, culture and sense of community or sense of self? Or the gifts that tradition we're taught to come from the earth and the elements, to the lessons that we would learn from the gifts of the Creator about love, joy and wisdom.

In this setting, we're trying to summarize and give folks this plan: How do we move forward into the future, taking all of the lessons that we've put together and create not only the healthy relationship we want, but be able to make it second-nature that we continue to practice these things in a way that we don't have to continue to struggle and worry about being in a healthy relationship, but that we are in a healthy relationship and we can pass that on to our children and to the others around us.

That is a quick summary of the Leading the Next Generation's Healthy Relationships curriculum. I'm certainly open to any questions that folks might have about that.

**Sarah Schappert:** Thank you, Gordon, for your presentation. We have a couple of questions that we're going to ask right now to you, Gordon, and then a few from Mary Lee as well.

While I'm asking these questions, if anyone has any other questions they'd like to ask, if you want to type those questions in on your screen at this moment, we'll respond to as many as we can.

One question for Gordon and Pam is: Throughout the presentation you presented on some of the definitions that are in your curriculum. Are there specific exercises that you guys do to incorporate those terms and definitions into the course in an interactive manner?

**Gordon James:** Certainly, because when we're looking chapter by chapter and we're incorporating the definitions, the reason we bring those definitions in is because those are important elements that we're going to be covering during the course of that chapter in a number of different ways.

We include those specific definitions because that's the way we want everyone to come to a common understanding of how we define the word. Because we've seen too often people in communicating with each other, could even be using the same words, but have a different understanding of what the meaning is. So we simply provide those definitions to provide the context how we'll use them in the course of that particular chapter.

**Sarah Schappert:** Okay, thank you. I have a question here for Mary Lee. What steps were taken to involve the larger Blackfeet community and community leaders in the development of your adapted curriculum and the project itself? I know that you guys utilized focus groups, but how did you go about conducting all of that?

**Mary Lee Crowe:** What we did was we had a group scheduled for the focus group, the professionals and the cultural people. The curriculum we use is the Love's Cradle curriculum.

When these people got involved in it, they came into the program and we more or less dissected the curriculum. They have really good handout lessons.

Involving our whole community has been a lot of activities such as the first annual Healthy Marriage Day, the

second annual Healthy Marriage Day. The Business Council has been involved in all of our activities and supports us in coming to it. We just planned these activities and the whole community more or less turns out for them.

**Sarah Schappert:** Thank you Mary Lee. I have another question that is related to Gordon, your slide on gender differences; the Hunters versus Gatherers. Could you provide more information on gender roles, for example, what were they traditionally and how have they changed?

Gordon James: A quick example that comes to mind in that area is as we looked in many communities, it was entirely typical to figure that the older men were going to be teaching the younger men what a man's role and responsibilities were in the community, and similarly for women, what they saw as the role, responsibilities and functions of women in that community.

In so many of our communities we have a lot of single-parent families where a single mother or a single father is trying to impart the lessons to their children of what it means to be a man or woman. So they're at a distinct disadvantage in being able to provide some elements of those teachings.

**Sarah Schappert:** Gordon in your tribe, just to help out some of the people on the call that might not be on a reservation, what were the traditional roles in your tribe for the males and females?

Gordon James: Kind of in the way we use the term "hunters and gatherers" it typically was, in my community, that the men were the hunters. They were the ones that were hunting the wild prey and bringing that food into the village while the women may have typically been the gatherers gathering the roots, the berries and a number of different medicinal plants. I guess that's the simplest example that I could share.

**Sarah Schappert:** Thank you, Gordon. I've had another question come in for Mary Lee that a couple people have asked about the Love's Cradle curriculum and it available for purchase. Before you speak Mary Lee, the Love's Cradle curriculum is available for purchase. It is a mainstream curriculum that is developed for various audiences.

I would like you, Mary Lee, to talk a little bit about the curriculum; how you guys found it and started utilizing it and what it included in it before you adapted it.

**Mary Lee Crowe:** My expert on the curriculum and what it involves is Steve. The curriculum was purchased in the second year, and I believe that's (Mary Artwell) that you get hold of. I'm pretty sure that's her name.

What we did was taking the curriculum and applies our culture into the curriculum. I'm going to give you the expert on the curriculum and how it was broken down. That would be Steve.

**Steve Racine:** Can you repeat the question?

**Sarah Schappert:** Yes, Steve. The question was: First they wanted to know if it was available for purchase, which Mary Lee has responded to, but what is incorporated in the curriculum and how did you guys go about choosing that specific one to use?

**Steve Racine:** It was implemented through our grant writer out of Albuquerque, New Mexico. I'll just go really quickly through what it teaches. The first lesson teaches showing understanding.

The second lesson is the foundation of why they're together, and we go - now this is an hour of teaching of the foundation of why they're together; the Love Reason.

Three is identifying stresses. They talk about their stresses. They break down into groups and go through their stresses.

Four is again, the talking stick. They introduce them to the talking stick and have them sit down and relate to each other in a structured way of handing back and forth the talking stick and how to communicate and open up the lines of communication that way.

Five talks about respect. We go into a whole hour of how you need to respect and how in a relationship you have to be 50/50 in everything that you do; decision making; there's no 60/40 or anything like that. It has to be 50/50.

Appreciation is Lesson 6. We go into appreciation and how to appreciate each other more and how to - like the affectionate-type things that go into that.

Seven is conflict management where we come up with a stop word. We talk about how your thoughts and emotions - the emotions take over your thought process and how to keep your thought process up high and your emotions down, because when your emotions start to take over, how that becomes unhealthy in a relationship. So we come up with a stop word. If the stop word issues, it's time to come back and do problem resolution.

Eight is sharing your feelings and how to talk about your feelings with your spouse. Going back to again respect and appreciation and using the talking stick in that format.

Nine and ten are actually talking about setting your boundaries and how to work with everything that comes in; your stresses in your life, those things and how to sit down and use these skills like the talking stick, talking about respect and appreciation, using conflict management and how that all ties together in dealing with the stresses. How to set boundaries to keep the unhealthy things that interfere in your relationship, how to keep them at a distance, and how you do that is by communicating and setting your boundaries that way.

Eleven and twelve we go into talking about making that final commitment. If they're not married, how to do

that. We talked about trust issues and all the things that interfere in a relationship like the past. We talk about those types of things.

We have guest speakers that come in; the elders and some of the things that they do. We have a couple from Behavioral Health that come in and talk about marital issues and stuff like that if need be, but they do come in and do a presentation.

We actually have Dan, the guy that talked earlier, our Deputy Director, and his wife come in and talk a little bit about their relationship and some of the things that need to be done and how to work together in dealing with those; financial and stuff that comes up with your kids and the stresses in dealing with that.

**Sarah Schappert:** Thank you.

**Steve Racine:** Can I add one more thing?

**Sarah Schappert:** Yes, you can.

**Steve Racine:** That we kind of improvised, but the cultural things were all added. Our first hour is straight curriculum. Our second hour we bring in the cultural director. He comes in and does all the cultural stuff. That's how we inter-mingled it to add the culture part into it.

**Sarah Schappert:** Thank you, Steve. It's great to hear of a grantee that is able to take a curriculum such as Love's Cradle. There are other ones such as PREP or PAIRS that some grantees use, and BE able to utilize it using the content that is in there, but also adapting it to their community's needs and the culture.

I think it has been beneficial to those on the call to hear how you guys have been able to do that, because it's something that has been difficult for many grantees.

I'm going to ask one more question before we conclude the webinar. It's for Pam and Gordon James and their curriculum. In what ways does the conflict section of the curriculum address domestic violence?

**Gordon James:** It's not that it's specifically intended to address domestic violence. It's specifically addressed to understand what our habits are in conflict, and unfortunately some folks' habits in conflict are violent.

We have a section in the curriculum that's not a part of that chapter that is a domestic violence protocol that communities can look at and utilize for that purpose. We're really trying to get folks to understand in that chapter what are the roots of our own behavior as well as a better understanding of the roots of the behavior in the people around us, and understanding that those are habits that we have developed over time.

How can we look to change those habits into behaviors that are healthier that can help us to build well families

and well couples. That's our approach in that chapter: how to take a more productive and proactive approach to choosing to be a healthier person in a healthier relationship, not limited by the conflicts and perceptions of the past.

**Sarah Schappert:** Thank you, Gordon. We've had a few other questions come in. But we are getting to the close of the webinar. So we are going to ask if you guys can answer some poll questions that are going to come up on your screen. You should answer them as I'm asking the question. You then will have a few seconds to answer the question.

The first question is: I have a better understanding of the need for relationship curricula to be culturally relevant to the Native American population.

If you can just check the box to say if you strongly agree, agree, I'm sure, just agree or strongly disagree. I'll give you a few seconds.

The next poll question is: I have a better idea of the elements of a healthy relationship curriculum that is specifically developed for the Native American population. If you can, answer that quickly.

The next question is: I am more aware of the strategies for adapting already existing healthy relationships in marriage curricula that resound more strongly with Native American couples.

The final poll question: I found today's webinar to be informative and useful.

I'd like to thank all of the speakers for participating in this call today and all of the grantees that attended the call.

The recording of the webinar will be up on the transcript and the PowerPoint will be put on the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center website in a few days, a week or so. You can access it from there.

Also, on the slide right now, is the email address if you would like to subscribe to the list-serve if you're not already on it. As I said at the beginning of the webinar, we will be developing some more tools with the resource center and they will be sending emails out about that. So if you would like to subscribe, you can do so.

We would just like to thank all of you. It concludes the webinar for today.

**Woman:** Thank you Sarah.

**Sarah Schappert:** Thank you.

**Daniel McFadyeah:** Thank you and have a good afternoon.

**Operator:** Thank you everyone. This does conclude the conference call for today. We thank you all for your participation and ask that you please disconnect. Before doing so, please be sure to fill out the survey. Have a great day.

END