



NHMRC August 2009 Webinar Frequently Asked Questions

**Effective Marketing and Recruitment Strategies for Relationship
Education Programs Serving Native Americans**

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Effective Marketing and Recruitment Strategies for Relationship Education Programs Serving Native Americans

Please note: This webinar and these FAQs were designed for Administration for Native American grantees. While much of the information can be useful for all practitioners of marriage education working with Native Americans, if you have specific questions pertaining to a federal grant, please contact your Federal Project Officer.

Questions for Tom Chee

1. How did you decide to hold classes on a weekday evening? Does this work better for you than having classes on consecutive Saturdays/Sundays or as a weekend retreat?

All of our participants drive into town to work during the week, and it is quite a commute for most people. It is therefore easier for them to stop on their way home and attend a class, rather than make a special trip on the weekend.

2. What are your top three recruitment strategies?

The first are our radio advertisements. We find that people are great listeners, and they respond to ads that discuss the positive impact of healthy families on children. Second, our various recruiting tools have proven effective for bringing in participants. These include flyers, newspaper articles, local broadcasts, partnerships with community agencies, word-of-mouth referrals, and information on the internet. Third, our staff is vital towards recruiting new participants. They make every effort to be approachable and are able to speak the tribal language.

Questions for Jenna Umiamaka

3. How did you devise the idea of

treating each couple to a candlelit dinner?

We found that what is lacking in our couples' relationships is quality time spent together, without children. We want to spoil our parents and remind them why they fell in love. This quality time together is crucial towards maintaining a strong relationship, and therefore a strong family unit. If programs lack the funds to provide a full candlelight dinner to each couple, they can pursue less expensive options. For instance, they can order take-out and put the food on nice plates, or even use nicely decorated paper plates. Regardless of how fancy it is, the important part of the intimate meal is to provide couples with one-on-one time together.

4. What advice can you offer to a program that does not have a male/female duo facilitating each class?

Ideally, each class will have a male and female facilitator. Men often get tired of listening to women, and can relate more easily to other men. Male facilitators are also crucial for portraying how male role models should act. Many programs, however, have difficulty hiring enough male facilitators for each session. If this is the case, programs should consider bringing in a male as a guest speaker for one or more lessons.

5. How do you count an individual as having completed the program if they are non-Native?

Non-Native spouses and partners may be counted as program participants. Programs may also count non-Natives who are raising Native children.

Questions for both presenters

6. How can programs best include cultural activities in their lessons?

Tom Chee: Our curriculum includes lessons on where and how families have functioned throughout history. In the Navaho tribe, the paternal uncles have traditionally had the duty of identifying potential mates for their nieces. In selecting a mate, the uncles examine how the potential relationship would benefit the community. It is also critical not to promote a stereotypical view of romance. In the Navaho community, marriage is based on commitment and making the community a good place to live.

Jenna Umiamaka: We incorporate many cultural aspects, such as Native games that were played prior to contact, traditional foods, and the Native language. We also encourage couples to look toward each other and their children to find happiness, instead of to the outside world. This emphasis on finding happiness within your family is a central component to our culture.

7. How do you accommodate single parents in your program?

Tom Chee: Our approach is to say that being a single parent is not a stigma. We include single parents in our regular classes. We want to help single parents see how they can build a better relationship in the future. Also, we provide them with information and statistics on families that they can share with their extended families.

Jenna Umiamaka: We encourage single parents to embrace their heritage and be happy with themselves. We want them to learn about love,

communication, and other such components that are important not only in a marriage but in any family unit. As part of our efforts to reach out to singles, we go into a women's prison and help women to see a different way of being in a relationship from what they may have previously experienced.

8. How do you obtain initial buy-in from the community for your program?

Jenna Umiamaka: We promote the program by asking community leaders to attend a class and see what the couples are learning. Initially it was difficult to get these leaders onboard with the program. We are fortunate to be part of a broader agency that gave us legitimacy in the community.

Tom Chee: We separate elected leaders from non-elected leaders, such as ministers, elders, and health practitioners. It is crucial for programs to get to know these non-elected leaders, since they often interact with the community in a different way from elected officials, and may have more influence on the families.

9. How do you select trainers and facilitators?

Jenna Umiamaka: First, we examine what prospective facilitators are doing in the community. Then, we hold interviews with them in order to get a sense of whether or not they fit with our program's mission.

Tom Chee: We look for facilitators with a commitment, desire, and spirit that connect with our program. Some facilitators have a purely Navaho perspective, while others have had multi-cultural experiences. Both types of facilitators can fit with our lessons, as long as they are committed to our families and the community.