

CONNECTIONS

A Group Intervention for Mothers and Children Experiencing Violence in Relationships

**A Curriculum
for Aboriginal
Communities**



**Breaking
the
Cycle**



Mothercraft®
Shaping Children's Lives Through Learning

Acknowledgements

Mothercraft/Breaking the Cycle would like to thank the Public Health Agency of Canada for its support in the development and dissemination of *Connections: A Group Intervention for Mothers and Children Experiencing Violence in Relationships*. *Connections* is available in English and French, and has been adapted for Aboriginal communities. Earlier versions of *Connections* were created with the support of Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General and Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and we are grateful for their support.

Special thanks are owed to Sue Hunter, Wendy Reynolds, Annie Bourret, and the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres for their assistance with writing, editing, translating, and adapting *Connections* along the way.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to the staff and mothers in Mothercraft's Breaking the Cycle program, without whose contributions this manual could not have been written.

Funding for this publication was provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

© Copyright 2014 by Mothercraft Press
www.mothercraft.ca

Introduction

In the late fall of 2006, the Ministry of Child and Youth Services (Child Welfare Transformation Fund), approved funding for the development of the *Connections* curriculum for different groups, including Ontario's francophone community and the Aboriginal community. The original *Connections* curriculum provided education, information, and a safe opportunity for women to explore and process information regarding their past and present victimization, and to investigate its impact on their parenting, their recovery, and their children's development through a holistic and integrated approach.

This manual will examine the issues of substance abuse, child development, parenting and domestic violence problems in a culturally appropriate, holistic and integrated way which will reflect the reality of the existence of these problems for most Aboriginal women with substance use problems. Their situation is further complicated since Aboriginal women face a number of underlying issues, including multi-generational and inter-generational loss of culture and heritage and a legacy of racism, discrimination, poverty and abuse in their individual, family, community and systemic relations. Many factors contribute to these problems including residential school syndrome, child welfare systems and foster care in non-Aboriginal environments and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders, which have affected many Aboriginal peoples.

The three major areas that the *Connections* pilot addressed were:

- i. The relationship among domestic violence, substance abuse, and recovery from substance abuse.
- ii. The relationship among domestic violence, child development and child maltreatment.
- iii. The relationship between domestic violence and parenting.

This adapted curriculum will also address these issues, but in a cultural manner, that seeks to feed the spirit of our Aboriginal sisters as they address their issues.

Throughout the manual we will focus on traditional cultural teachings and practices and we have added notes for the facilitator to support a complete understanding of these teachings and cultural approaches .



This curriculum was adapted by the Children's Initiatives Team of the:

Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres

219 Front Street East | Toronto, Ontario M5A 1E8 | Tel: (416) 956-7575 | Fax: (416) 956-7577

Table of Contents

9 WEEK 1 **Introductory Session**

- 10..... Introduction of The Cleansing
- 11..... Introduction of The Eagle Feather
& the Elder
- 12..... The First Prayer & Introductions
- 12..... Introduction of Facilitator
& Participants
- 13..... Purpose and Objectives
- 14 Sessions Overview
- 15..... Ground Rules
- 16 Questions & Expectations
- 18 The Medicines
- 19 The Medicine Wheel
- 20 The Reflections Wheel
- 22..... Seven Grandfather: The Story
- 25..... The Seven Grandfathers' Wheel
- 26 Activity & Assignment
- 27..... Reflections

29 WEEK 2 **Respect & Truth—Learning about Healthy Relationships**

- 30 Opening
- 31 Teachings & Key Messages
- 32..... Overview & Context
- 33 Last Week & Unhealthy
Relationships
- 34 Unhealthy Relationships
- 36 What is Domestic Violence
- 39 Domestic Violence Wheel
- 40..... What does a Healthy
Relationship Look Like?
- 43 Non-Violence Wheel
- 44..... Domestic Violence &
Substance Abuse
- 51..... Assignment & Reflections

53 WEEK 3 **Honesty & Bravery—What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now**

- 54 Opening
- 55..... Key Messages
- 56 Overview & Last Week
- 59 Teachings: Honesty & Bravery
- 61 Teachings: Path of Life
- 62 Teachings: Eagle Feather
- 65 Discussion
- 66 Assignment
- 67 Reflections
- 68 Infosheet: What Happens When
Children Live with Unhealthy
or Violent Relationships?

69 WEEK 4 **Humility—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child**

- 70 Opening
- 71..... Key Messages & Overview
- 72..... Last Week & Activity
- 73..... Teachings
- 74..... Infosheet: Characteristics
of Healthy Relationships
- 76..... Worksheet: Healthy
Relationship Quiz
- 77..... Assignment & Reflections

Table of Contents

79 WEEK 5

Wisdom—Child Development and Behaviour

- 80 Opening
- 81 Key Messages & Overview
- 82 Teachings: Wisdom
- 82 Life Cycle Responsibility Wheel
- 84 Infosheet: Brain Development
- 85 Infosheet: The Stages of Development
- 86 Infosheet: Helping Our Children Grow
- 88 Assignment & Reflections

89 WEEK 6

Love—Building Self-esteem

- 90 Opening
- 91 Key Messages & Overview
- 92 Last Week & Teachings
- 94 Worksheet: 8 Good Things About Me
- 95 Goals & Decisions
- 96 Worksheet: My Goals Wheel
- 97 Infosheet: Affirmations
- 98 Assignment & Reflections

99 WEEK 7

Reflection—Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

- 100 Opening
- 101 Key Messages, Overview & Last Week
- 102 Teachings
- 103 Activity
- 104 Infosheet: Building Competence and Self-esteem in Children
- 105 Activity
- 106 Worksheet: Four Great Things About My Child
- 107 Worksheet: Ways to Show My Child I Love Her/Him and Three Special Way to Show My Child I Love Her/Him
- 108 Review
- 111 Evaluation

Introductory Session



Included in this section

- Introduction of The Cleansing
- Introduction of the Eagle Feather & the Elder
- First Prayer
- Introduction of Facilitator & Participants
- Purpose & Objectives
- Workshop Sessions Overview
- Establishing Ground Rules
- Questions & Expectations
- The Medicines
- The Medicine Wheel
- The Reflections Wheel
- Seven Grandfather Teachings
- The Seven Grandfathers' Wheel
- Activity & Assignment
- Reflections

Introductory Session

The Cleansing

Purification is an ancient Aboriginal tradition whose roots date beyond historic times. This important act was performed to purify the people and places about to be used for sacred or significant events, such as before meditation, or before starting an important meeting.

The tradition to purify a new dwelling place before moving in is deeply rooted in ceremonies of First Nations happy to have found a good hunting territory or a new place to live.

Traditionally, Aboriginal people would burn medicines in a large shell. Any shell can be used, but the abalone is the most popular. It is a beautiful shell that withstands the intense heat emitted from the burning of the medicines. A shell is chosen because in the purification process four elements are represented: the shell for the water, the match for the fire, the herbs and ashes for the earth, and the smoke for the air.

Native spirituality teaches us that as the smoke rises in the air so do our prayers rise up to the spiritual world. As the smoke from the burning herbs vanishes into the air, it floats up into the sacred place where all the Spirits live. The smoke brings our message to the world of the Creator and all the good spirits are grateful for the offering.

Notes to Facilitator:

The room should be set up in a circle so that all participants will be able to see each other and no one will have their back to another. The facilitator may arrange prior to the session for a smudge bowl, appropriate smudging materials, matches and an eagle feather. The facilitator will arrange for someone to smudge the room and each of the participants, and may have special instructions for women on their moon time (menses). In many traditional societies, women on their moon time are already involved in a purification/preparation time and are not expected to participate in cleansing rituals. Participants should be urged to do the smudging during future sessions.

Introductory Session

The Eagle Feather & The Elder

THE EAGLE FEATHER

Aboriginal peoples regard the eagle as a sacred bird. The Eagle represents core values and/or powers such as strength, loyalty, honesty, and compassion. Like all ceremonial objects, the eagle feather is always treated with the utmost respect. The Eagle Feather is the highest honour/gift we are given. There are many teachings associated with the gift and it is important that the group be given these teachings by a traditional teacher/elder.

INTRODUCTION OF ELDER/TRADITIONAL TEACHER

Aboriginal Elders/Traditional Teachers play a critical role in the inter-generational transmission of First Nations wisdom, values, traditions, languages and cultures in our communities. Elders/Traditional Teachers are the contemporary link to the traditional knowledge and culture from our past and they are the foundations upon which Aboriginal communities are built.

It should be noted that age is not the determining factor on who is an Elder/Traditional Teacher. Elders/Traditional teachers take on a responsibility for making the teachings available for the community and the Nation. This is not a role they are given, but rather a role they select when they are willing to take on the responsibility to pass the teachings to the next generation. They are defined by their actions.

Through their teachings, Aboriginal Elders/Traditional Teachers play a vital role in the protection and promotion of mental, spiritual, emotional and physical health of Aboriginal peoples and their communities, and they are instrumental in the retention and transmission of our millennia of traditional knowledge, including traditional healing practices and medicines.

The holistic teachings and traditional knowledge of Elders/Traditional Teachers, including traditional healing practices and medicines, form part of a continuum of care in the promotion of healthy lives for all Aboriginals.

Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator will first note the significance of the Eagle Feather.

The facilitator will then explain the role of Elders/Traditional Teachers within all Aboriginal communities. The Elder/Traditional Teacher should remain in attendance during each session and be available to speak with each of the Participants, if they wish to discuss personal issues. There should be arrangements made in advance for a location that offers privacy to the Elder/Traditional Teacher and the Participant should they wish to talk during the sessions.

The facilitator should then provide the Elder/Traditional Teacher with a gift of tobacco and then introduce the Elder/Traditional Teacher to the group.

The Elder/Traditional Teacher will then make the Prayer and encouraged to say a few words to the Participants.

Introductory Session

The First Prayer & Introductions

FIRST PRAYER

Prayers in Aboriginal cultures are an expression of the human relationship between the Creator and spirit helpers (akin to guardian angels). Prayers are offered at individual or group ceremonies. Usually the Elder will offer the first prayer of the session.

The prayer will usually give thanks to the four directions and the helpers and the ones who have come to sit in the circle. Thanks will be offered for the gifts of Creation in bringing the individuals participating in these sessions together. It is important for people to bring their minds and hearts together in the circle and to offer a commitment to contribute to the best of their ability. Often the prayer seeks support, wisdom, strength and guidance during the coming session as the participants face difficult issues.

INTRODUCTION OF FACILITATOR & PARTICIPANTS

In order that everyone is comfortable sharing their thoughts during the coming sessions it is important that everyone know something about each other. The facilitator will take the lead in this process. She will stand and speak to the group, while holding the Eagle Feather, and share with the group details of her life. When the facilitator is finished she will pass the Eagle Feather to the person on his/her right and ask them to repeat the process. This will be repeated until the Eagle Feather returns to the facilitator who will then place it in its container before proceeding with the meeting.

Notes to Facilitator:

It is important for the facilitator to set the proper tone of the session. If the group is to benefit from all that follows they need to have a level of trust and respect for their fellow participants. The Prayer and Introduction begins that process in a good way.

Introductory Session

Purpose and Objectives

PURPOSE

To provide a culture-based foundation for all of the participants and the facilitator, through which the various elements of the program will be introduced.

OBJECTIVES

1. To open the program in a culturally appropriate manner.
2. To introduce the elder and offer the first prayer.
3. To introduce the participants to each other and to the resource people, who will be participating in the program.
4. To provide an overview of the program sessions Weeks 2-7.
5. To establish the ground rules for the participants and facilitator.
6. To provide information about healing from an Aboriginal cultural perspective.
7. To introduce the participants to the medicine wheel and the sacred medicines.
8. To introduce the Seven Grandfather teachings to the participants.
9. To identify the tools intended to help and assist the participants and the facilitator.

Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator will review the Purpose and the Objectives with the participants and insure that they all understand the Objectives of the Introductory Session.

Introductory Session

Sessions Overview

In the coming weeks we will be covering a number of topics. These include the following:

WEEK 2

Grandfather Teaching—RESPECT & TRUTH
Learning About Healthy Relationships

WEEK 3

Grandfather Teaching—HONESTY & BRAVERY
What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

WEEK 4

Grandfather Teaching—HUMILITY
Recovering From My Past:
Building Healthy Relationships For Me and My Child

WEEK 5

Grandfather Teaching—WISDOM
Child Development & Behaviour

WEEK 6

Grandfather Teaching—LOVE
Building Self-esteem

WEEK 7

Grandfather Teaching—REFLECTION
Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem In Our Children

Notes to Facilitator:

Review the next 6 sessions' topics highlighting the featured Grandfather Teaching and the theme of the session. The facilitator should make clear that there will be weekly assignments to complete prior to the next session and that group participation is encouraged and welcomed.

Introductory Session

Ground Rules

1. These sessions are work. However, they are also time for personal growth, making friends and enlisting support. Use the time to get ac-quainted with your fellow attendees, obtain new information from the facilitator and the group and reinforce some things that you already know.
2. The day begins promptly at the time indicated. Please be on time. It shows disrespect to your fellow attendees if you are late.
3. Each session will begin with a housekeeping item. If there are any changes to be made to the agenda or facilities, or if there are other interesting facts that bear mention, it will be mentioned during this time.
4. No mood altering substances are allowed to be used at any time during the sessions.
5. Common courtesy is expected of all. Respect each other's time, do not have side conversations during presentations and do not interrupt each other when speaking.
6. Participation of all participants is expected. As with all things in life – you get out of it what you put in to it.
7. Work to create a respectful learning environment for all persons Involved in the sessions.

Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator will ask the Group to set out some ground rules to govern the sessions. Break the group into teams and ask them to write down their ideas on what rules should be applied, so that the group can participate in a good way. Have each group present their thoughts to the whole group and compile a List of Rules that all agree will apply. The above list is illustrative and merely for assistance and discussion purposes.

Introductory Session

Questions & Expectations

QUESTIONS

The facilitator should ascertain if there are any questions or concerns of the participants at this stage and address such questions. Those in attendance should be assured that all questions will be considered and that in fact questions are welcomed and encouraged at any stage of the weekly sessions.

EXPECTATIONS

Traditionally Aboriginal people recognized very specific roles and responsibilities for all those within the Life Cycle. For example, women had the responsibility as the first teachers to explain the world around the children. Included in the roles and responsibilities were expectations. Parents, extended family and community members were responsible to explain and teach children what was expected of them, as a person, a family member, a community member and a member of a Nation.

Notes to Facilitator:

Using a flip chart the facilitator will ask the Group what are their expectations for the Sessions. Using the Medicine Wheel, as shown on the following page, the facilitator will ask the group for suggestions on:

My VISION for these sessions is ...

I would like to KNOW ...

The REASON I would like to have this knowledge is ...

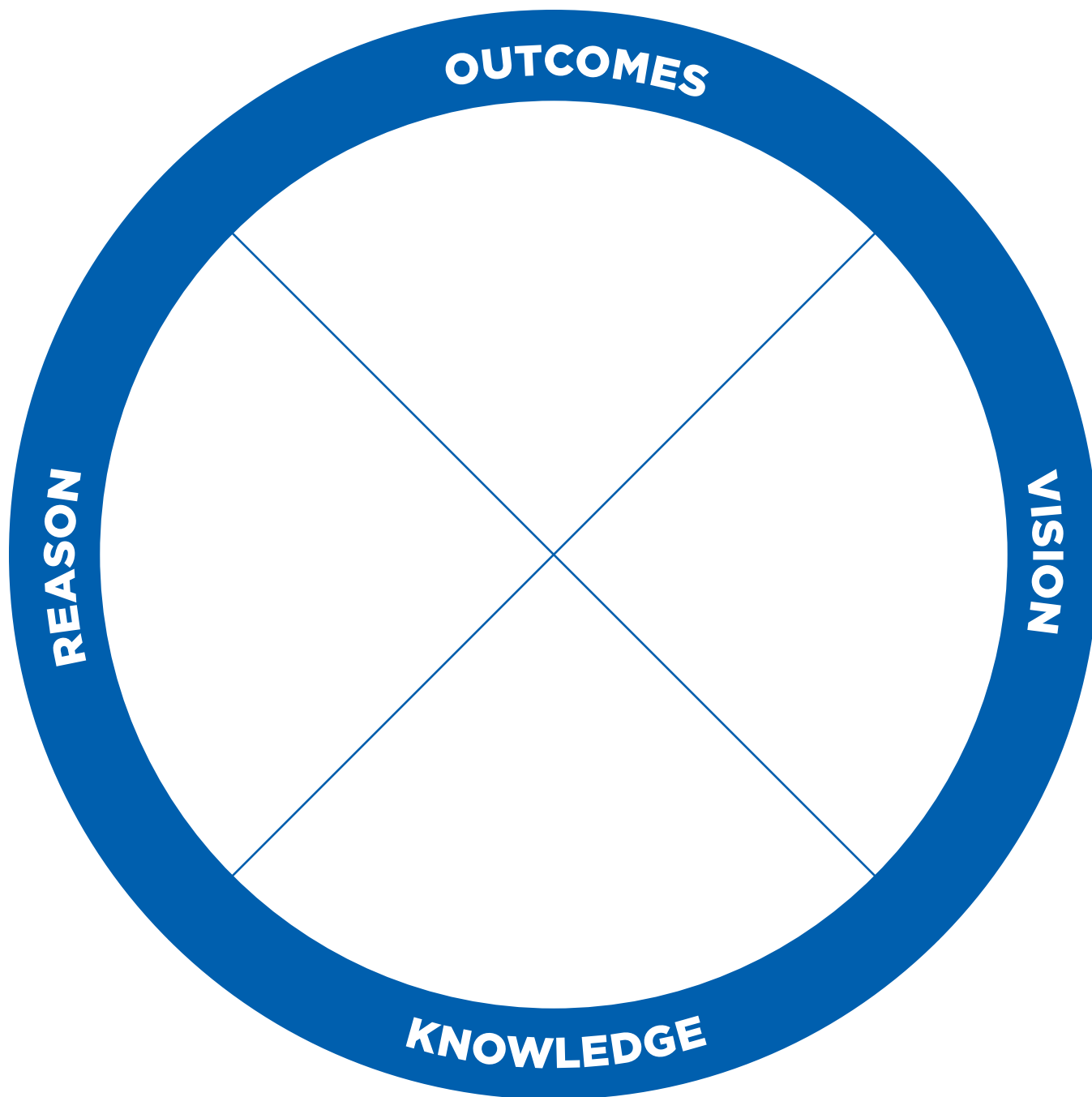
My personal OUTCOMES from these sessions would be ...

WEEK

1

Introductory Session

Questions & Expectations



Introductory Session

The Medicines

TOBACCO

Before all ceremonies, tobacco was offered to the spirits. The universal method of inviting people to feasts or notifying them of ceremonies was the delivery of a small amount of dry tobacco by a runner sent out for that purpose.



SWEETGRASS

Sweet grass is often called the hair of Mother Earth. Sweet grass is the most feminine of these herbs and is used to call in good energies.



Sweetgrass calls in the good spirits and the good influences. As with cedar, burning sweetgrass while praying sends prayers up to the Creator in the smoke.

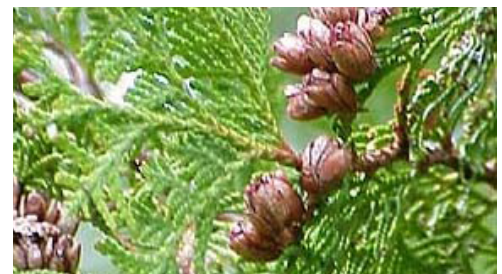
SAGE

Sage is burned in ceremonies to help people focus, to help create balance, and also to call spirits to enter the area where a ceremony will take place. It is the medicine used most often by women as they realize and recognize their role as life givers and how much of their work relates to helping those who have been hurt by others and by life itself.



CEDAR

This medicine is used in all healing ceremonies. Its first teaching is a reminder to us that the Creator promised to be with us at all times. It is the only medicine plant which remains green in the winter and continues to do its work even as the Earth is covered in snow



Introductory Session

The Medicine Wheel

The Medicine Wheel or Circle emphasizes a holistic approach to maintain balance and equilibrium in life for a successful, fulfilling lifestyle. Use of the Medicine Wheel combined with sacred ceremonies such as purification, honoring the Creator, and asking for guidance and direction in all that we do, are effective for teaching and learning.

Elders teach us that the Medicine Wheel was the most important and powerful healing tool ever known to man. We will use this powerful symbol to aid us as we foster spirituality, self-esteem for ourselves, respect for all others, cooperative group learning and team effort. Your knowledge, life actions and your personal emotions are combined in the Wheel and can work to your benefit.

The Medicine Wheel is a symbol representing the wholeness of the traditional native way of life. It is a perfect shape without beginning or end, a top or bottom. It represents constant movement and change. As we observe nature we can see that cycles of life and nature move in a circular fashion. The expanding circles are like ripples in a pond that represents the development of spiritual, emotional and physical needs. The Medicine Wheel represents not only spirituality, but it also symbolizes reason, emotion and the physical aspect of peoples' beliefs.

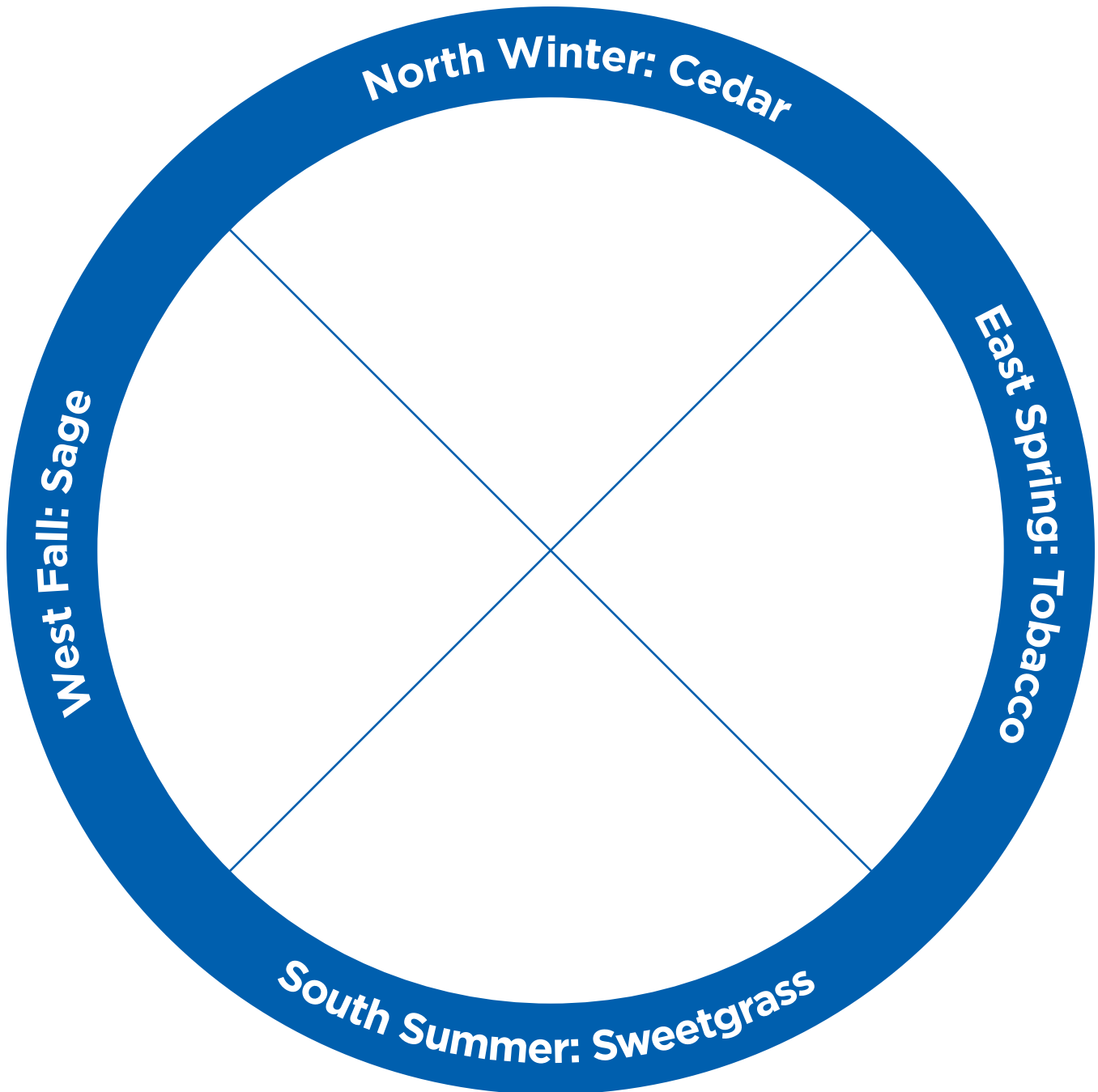
The Medicine Wheel also represents and symbolizes unity, peace, harmony and courage. Use of the Wheel will help us achieve balance in this life. The circular form that the Medicine Wheel takes is a graphic representation of the cyclical nature of all relationships and interactions between living things on the earth. Everything in the Universe is part of a single whole.

WEEK

1

Introductory Session

The Reflections Wheel



Introductory Session

The Reflections Wheel

Notes to Facilitator: On a flip chart draw a Medicine Circle as shown on previous page, and then lead the group through an exercise of filling in the sections:

First the four directions starting always in the East.

Then the four seasons, starting with the spring.

Then placing the four sacred medicines on the wheel.

- *Tobacco in the East since it is the first medicine to be given. It represents the promise between the Creator and humans, that he will always be willing to listen to them.*
- *Sweetgrass in the South as it is the medicine that speaks about youth and young people. It is connected to Mother Earth and has a shiny and beautiful side to show off, but also a side that is not, just like youth. When it is braided it cannot be pulled apart. Likewise when your body, mind and spirit are solidly connected you will be full and strong in your personal life.*
- *Sage is in the West. As we move into the next stage of our lives we always exit through the West and sage assists in that journey. The smell is intended to attract the spirits' attention.*
- *Cedar is placed in the North. While Mother Earth sleeps the cedar stays green, showing that she still watches over and protects us.*

Explain the reasons for each as they are completed and how each represents the circular nature of life as we travel through it. Ensure the group understands and appreciates the symmetry of the process. Ask the group to place the ages of man in the wheel also (Child/Youth/Adult/Senior) to see how they also follow the wheel. Explain that reflections is a process that allows the parties to process their own learning in any workshop or training session.

Introductory Session

The Seven Grandfathers

THE STORY

As time went on, human beings began to have a hard time living a good life. Sometimes they would become ill or they might fall or trip for no reason. They had forgotten how to look after themselves. They had almost forgotten their original instructions.

The animals and the Creator and the spirits could see human beings were in trouble as they had forgotten how to give thanks and how to ask for help. They had forgotten tobacco comes first and how to use it. The Creator sent one of the spirit helpers to look amongst human beings for someone with a pure spirit and pure heart, to be given certain gifts to help their fellow human beings.

The spirit looked everywhere in every village, house, cave, everywhere humans lived. Finally, spirit looked inside a pitiful house where a new born baby was heard to be crying and spirit found the perfect human boy. Spirit took the little boy and left a small part of the child's clothing to let the parents know the child had been taken in a good way.

The spirit took the little boy into the spirit realm, following a path that lead up from the earth to the star world. When he arrived with the little boy, Creator said "he's much too young, take him and show him Creation. When he is ready, bring him back and we will instruct him".

The Spirit took him out into the Universe to show him all of the stars and planets and all that the Creator made. Finally, when this had been done, they returned to the Creator's side and the little boy was ready to receive his instructions.

The Creator turned to the Seven Grandfathers, who sit in the Northern direction and they were asked to open their vessel and share their gift with the little boy to help the human beings. As each Grandfather opened the vessel, the little boy gazed into the vessel and could see the most beautiful gift he had seen in all of his time with the spirit.

The First Grandfather gave the gift of Respect and the teachings, which help human beings to recognize how they fit into and honour creation and to have the vision to see the Creator in all things.



Introductory Session

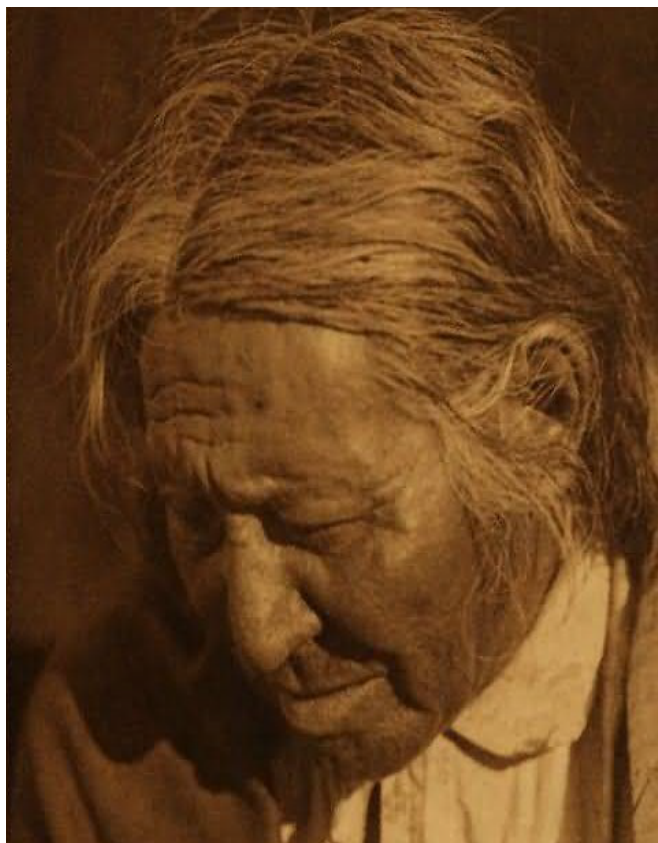
The Second Grandfather gave the gift of Truth and the instruction to seek and see the Truth in all things in life and that not all of the things we hear will be pleasant—sometimes the truth is very hard to hear.

The Third Grandfather gave the gift of Honesty. The little boy was taught that to be Honest, one must be both willing and brave. This gift can require us to look within and to see the truth of why we want or need to do something.

The Fourth Grandfather opened his vessel and the little boy looked in to find the gift of Bravery. The Fourth Grandfather spoke to him of facing his foes with integrity and that sometimes we are our own enemy.

The Sixth Grandfather opened his vessel to reveal the gift of Wisdom. The little boy was instructed to cherish knowledge and to learn from all of his life and Creation.

The Seventh Grandfather opened his vessel to give the little boy the gift and the teaching of Love. The little boy understood this to be the greatest gift and to cherish love and those he loved including himself. It is the responsibility of humans to love all of Creation and to honour all of life.



The little boy was then instructed to pick up the bundle containing these teachings and to return to his home. He was instructed to share these teachings with all of the people. As he journeyed home, he was joined by the otter, who would go here and there in all directions. As they travelled the little boy would share the teachings he carried in his bundle and the people he met would give him something from their bundle to carry as well.

By the time he and the otter emerged into his home village; he was an old man carrying a huge bundle. His parents knew him by his story and by the missing piece of his shirt left by the Spirit who took him.

Introductory Session

The Seven Grandfathers

MEDICINE WHEEL ACTIVITY

Using the flip chart, a circle will have already been drawn and divided into seven equal-sized “pie pieces”. With the assistance of the group the facilitator, write each of the Seven Grandfather’s Teachings inside the Circle, one to each section.

The facilitator will keep the Circle posted for each session and at the start of each session **add the Grandfather Teaching** for that session and the animal for that teaching, and review the previous “section” from the last week.

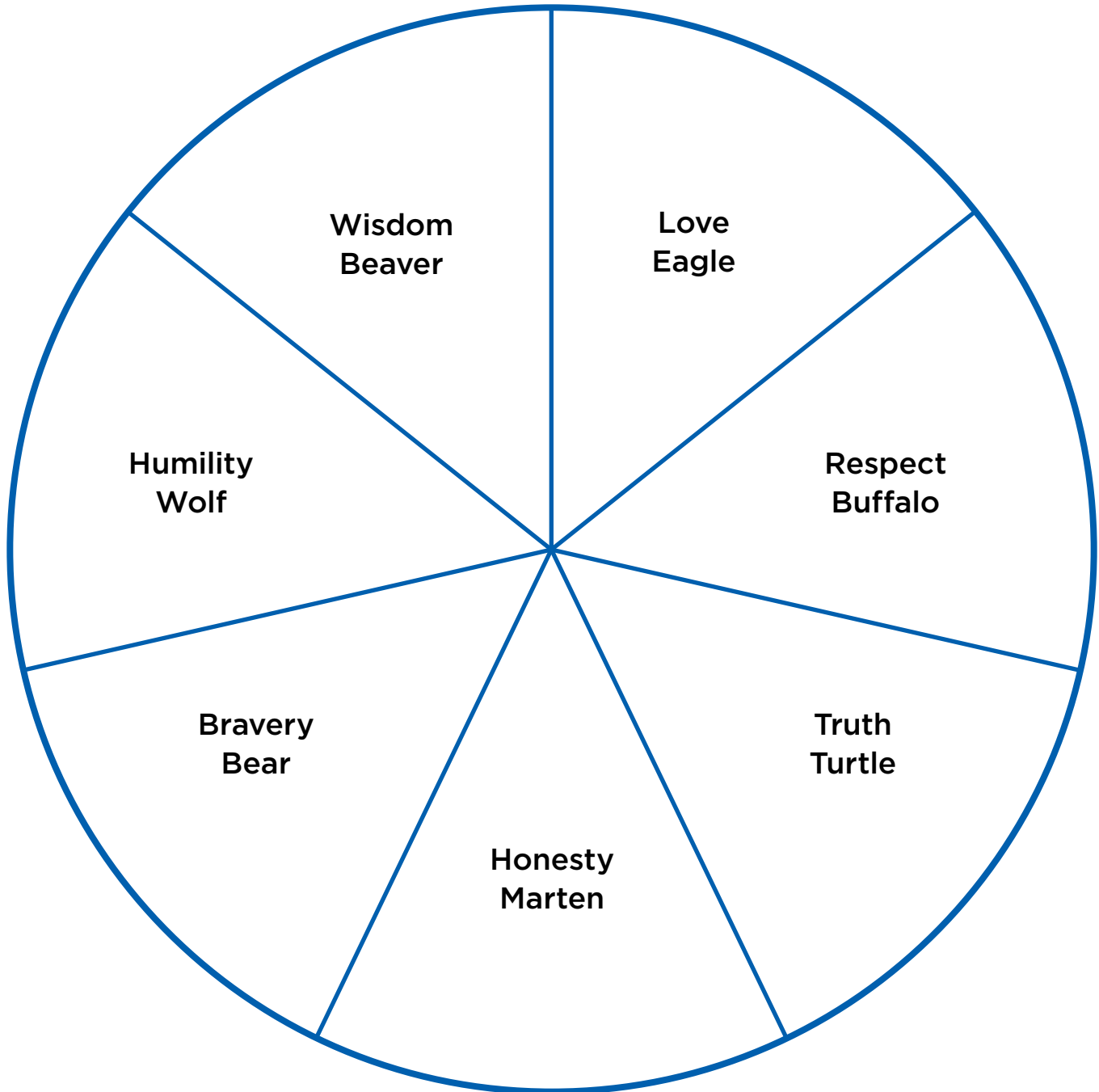
The finished Wheel will resemble the Wheel on the next page, although not necessarily in the same order.

Notes to Facilitator:

After reading the story the facilitator will have the group take a Nutrition break but before the break he/she will indicate that upon their return he/she will ask each of them what did they hear in the story that had meaning for them and how did it relate to their own life experiences. From each participant’s response, the facilitator will be able to ascertain her familiarity, or lack thereof, with Aboriginal culture (either their own, or in this case, an Anishnabek creation story) and also what themes in the story resonated with each person.

This insight will be useful to build upon as the sessions progress. The facilitator must make a mental note of these responses as they can be used in later sessions.

Introductory Session

The Seven Grandfathers' Wheel

Introductory Session

Activity & Assignment

TALKING STICK

The facilitator will invite the participants to decorate a “Talking Stick”. As they do this the facilitator will explain that the Talking Stick was a means by which people in council would be able to recognize and respect who had the “floor”.

When matters of great concern came before the council, the leading elder would hold the talking stick and begin the discussion. When he finished what he had to say he would hold out the talking stick, and whoever wished to speak after him would take it. In this manner the stick was passed from one individual to another until all who wished to speak had done so. The stick was then passed back to the leading elder for safe keeping.

Participants will be encouraged to utilize this procedure during the coming sessions.

WRAP-UP ASSIGNMENT

The group members will be asked to pay attention during the next week and make note of how, when and where either you were treated with **Respect**, or you saw someone being respected. When the group reconvenes next week group members will be asked to share their observations and findings with the class.

Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator will need to have a stick, approximately 18 to 24" in length available. It can be rough, smooth, straight, bent, carved or not, but without any sharp edges. Materials to be used for decoration will be ribbons in various colours and applied as the group members wish.

Introductory Session

Reflections

Teachings of the Medicine Wheel traditionally provided the Aboriginal person with an opportunity for reflection. In the book “The Sacred Tree” the author talks about the Medicine Wheel as a mirror that allows you to see things that you cannot normally see—things that are coming behind you or around the corner. The Medicine Wheel is also a tool for reflection.

Elders tell us that for true learning to occur we must apply ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Taking the Talking Stick the facilitator will lead off the group in sharing her thoughts on what she received from this session and then pass the Talking Stick on to the next person until all participants have had an opportunity to share their thoughts. Group members are encouraged to participate to the level of their own comfort or willingness to share their thoughts.

Closing Prayer

The Elder will be asked to close the meeting with a Closing Prayer.

WEEK

2

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships



Included in this section

- Opening
- Teachings & Key Messages
- Overview & Context
- Last Week
- Unhealthy Relationships
- What is Domestic Violence
- Domestic Violence Wheel
- What does a Healthy Relationship Look Like?
- Non Violence Wheel
- Impact of Domestic Violence on Substance Abuse
- Assignment & Reflections

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Opening

CLEANSING

The room and the participants will be smudged.

A participant will be asked to perform the ceremony this week.

INTRODUCTION OF ELDER

The Elder will be introduced to the group, welcomed by the facilitator and asked to say a Prayer and share some thoughts with the group on this week's theme, **Respect & Truth**.

ELDER PRAYER

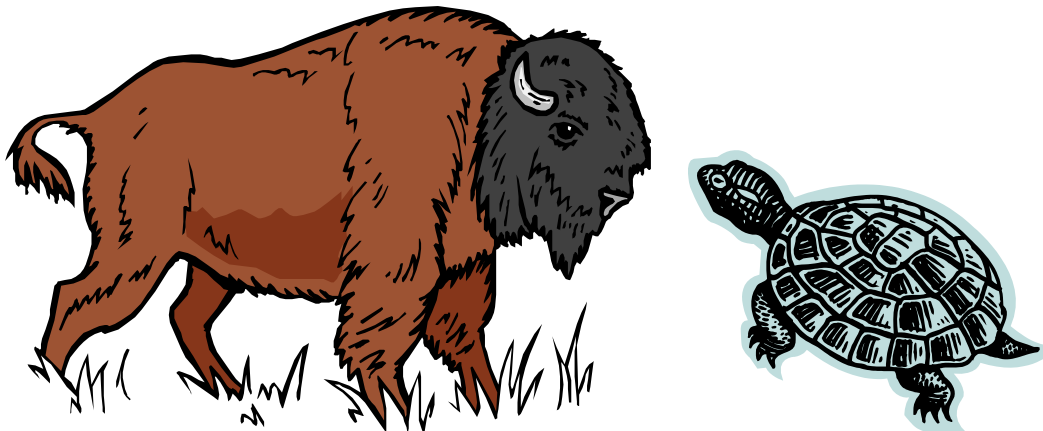
The Elder will say a prayer and speak to the group.

WORDS OF WELCOME

The facilitator will welcome the group again this week and remind them of the ground rules and the use of the Talking Stick.

POSTING OF MEDICINE WHEEL

The facilitator will post the Medicine Wheel from Week One and in a section write the word **Respect**, and the Animal for respect, the **Buffalo** and in another section write the word **Truth**, and the animal for truth the **Turtle**.



RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Teachings

During this week's session we will learn about Respect & Truth. It must come from within. It is not demanded, it is to be earned and given freely from the goodness of your heart! Show Respect for all things here on earth, all people, regardless of their race, their customs, their manner of dress or their language. It is very important to show others that you honor them or that you hold them in high regard, as you would do for your own grandmother. A person is also responsible to ensure that Truth is the foundation of our relationships. Truthfulness leads to trust within the self, friends, family and all others. It lasts forever, never changes and applies to all.

Key Messages

There are some key messages we want you to take from this week's session.

- No relationship is perfect but everyone has the right to a relationship that is nurturing and supportive.
- Domestic violence comes in many forms.
- You can recognize clues that a relationship may be moving from healthy to unhealthy.
- Unhealthy relationships may have an impact on your substance use and recovery.
- One of the responsibilities we have to ourselves is to look twice and to recognize respect and how it affects our relationships.

Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator will ensure that the group understands the key messages for this session and that the class will focus on what is an unhealthy relationship, how that kind of a relationship may affect your life and the lives of others, and what a healthy relationship could look like. The group will be encouraged to participate fully in the session, while affording Respect to their group and speaking truthfully.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Overview & Context

PURPOSE

The purpose of this session is to introduce the class to the connections which exist between domestic violence, substance abuse and parenting challenges.

The class will examine the need to **Respect** oneself and all others in Creation and the value of **Truth** will be discussed in relationships.

CONTEXT

Everyone on this earth has a right to healthy relationship. That relationship should be nurturing and supportive. Whether the person is an infant, a child, a youth, an adult or an old person they are each entitled to enjoy such relationships with those around them.

For many women who often have experienced unhealthy and/or violent relationships as a child, chaos seems to be the norm in their lives. Understanding and appreciating that there is in fact a different way to live, and that they are entitled to enjoy such a life, can be an extremely challenging concept. Taking that concept and making it reality can be even more difficult, but not impossible.

The **Seven Grandfather Teachings** can be used and applied daily to assist people who wish to become involved in a process of changing negative aspects of their lives. In this session we will focus on the concept and application of Respect, and the value of **Truth**.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Last Week & Unhealthy Relationships

LAST WEEK

Last week we asked you to make note of how, when and where either you were treated with respect, or you saw someone being respected. Please share with us your observations.

UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Next we will discuss unhealthy relationships. I will hand each of you a blank Medicine Wheel. There are four sections. I want you to mark down “Physical” in one of the sections, “Sexual” in another, “Verbal” in another and finally “Emotional” in the last.

Now take a few minutes to write down in each section ways that you have experienced, think, or know that people abuse others. For example in the Physical section we know one of the ways people abuse another physically is by hitting them, so you would mark down “hitting” and so on.

At the conclusion of the exercise we will see how many ways you have come up with. Please proceed.

Notes to Facilitator:

On a flip chart record the kinds of situations reported by the group members. Ask each person as they complete their observations how did they feel about what had occurred. Build upon the positive experiences. At the conclusion of the observations ask if anyone felt that they had been disrespected during the week. If so, make a notation about those occurrences on the chart and ask the person how they were feeling during the incident. Contrast the two situations.

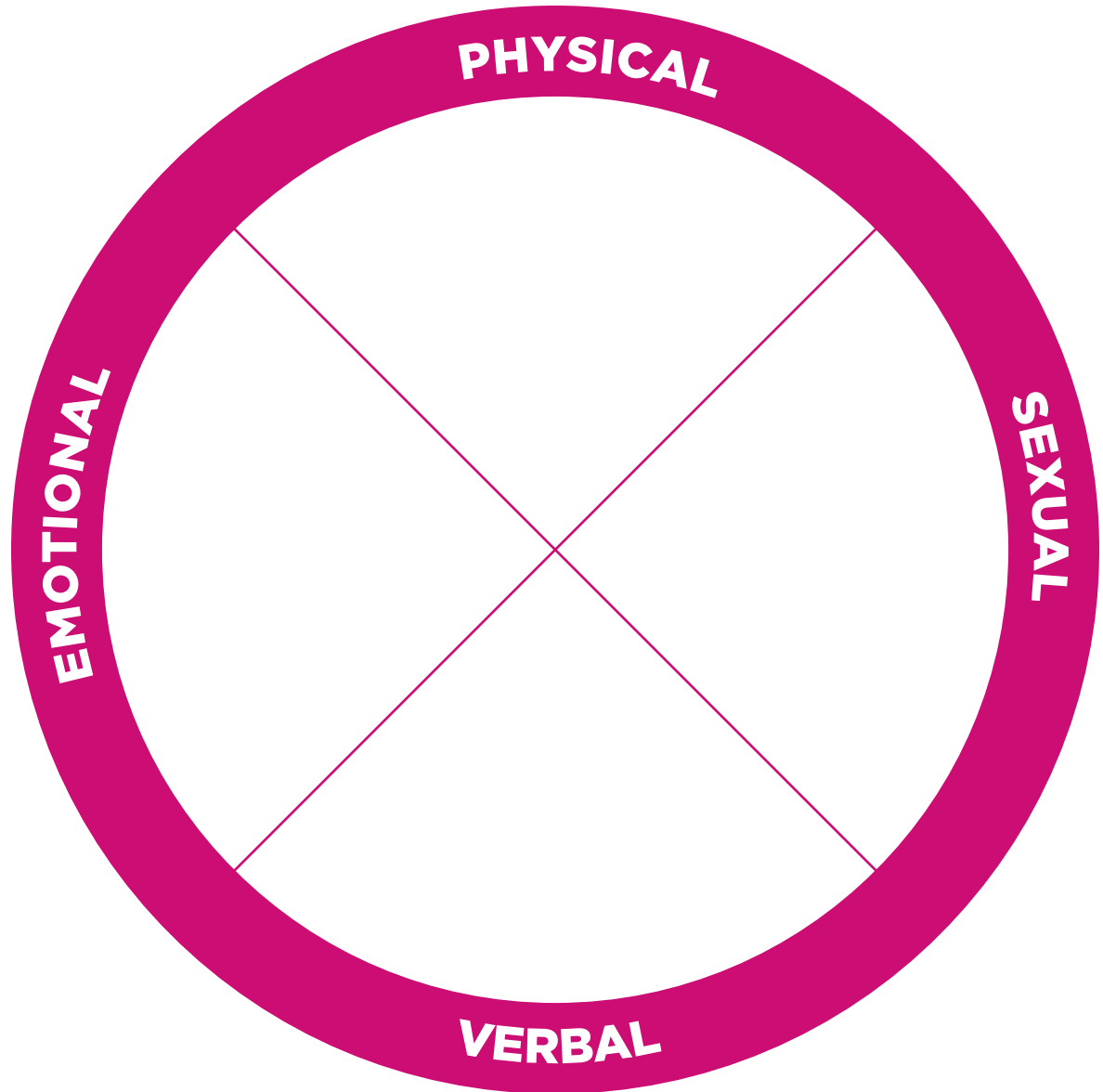
WEEK

2

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Unhealthy Relationships



Notes to Facilitator: The Blank Wheel should be provided to each member of the group and they label each quadrant accordingly. A blank wheel should be printed on standard size paper available for them to fill in each section. When the exercise is completed the facilitator will fill in a large wheel in the flip chart using the suggestions from the group as to kinds of abuse. When the wheel is completed the facilitator will ask for examples of how children are used in an abusive relationship and add those to the Wheel.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Unhealthy Relationships

KINDS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE	KINDS OF SEXUAL ABUSE	KINDS OF VERBAL ABUSE	KINDS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE
• Hitting • Slapping • Punching • Choking • Stabbing • Shooting • Hitting with any object • Over-medicating • Confining a woman	• Forced sex • Withholding sex • Having sex to keep someone quiet or to stop him from hurting you or your children • Painful sexual activity • Exposure to sexually transmitted diseases • Won't use or allow woman to use birth control	• Being yelled at • Cursed, • Use of demeaning insults on a regular basis • Loud voice • Threatening tone or words • Constant put downs • Argumentative unnecessarily • Confrontational attitude	• Insulting, demeaning, nasty comments: ugly, stupid, fat, lazy, useless • Threatening (to take the children, to hurt a woman or her children) • Destroying property or things that are important to the woman • Isolating you from friends, family or support services • Ridiculed for religious or cultural beliefs • Constant criticism of the person • Playing upon or using one's affections for others • Unexplained mood swings

Notes to Facilitator: These kinds of abuse are merely examples and not meant to be exhaustive of all possible means. They can be used as examples if not mentioned by the group

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Domestic Violence

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence (sometimes referred to as domestic abuse) occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate or harm the other. Other terms which have been used include spouse beating or battering, "relationship violence", "domestic abuse", "spousal abuse", and "family violence" with some legal jurisdictions having specific definitions.

The major study "*Aboriginal Domestic Violence in Canada*" completed in 2003 by the Healing Foundation of Canada stated the following:

"Aboriginal family violence and abuse:

1. Is a multi-factoral social syndrome and not simply an undesirable behaviour;
2. Resides within Aboriginal individuals, families and community relationships, as well as within social and political dynamics;
3. Typically manifests itself as a regimen of domination that is established and enforced by one person over one or more others, through violence, fear and a variety of abuse strategies;
4. Is usually not an isolated incident or pattern, but is most often rooted in intergenerational abuse;
5. Is almost always linked to the need for healing from trauma;
6. Is allowed to continue and flourish because of the presence of enabling community dynamics, which as a general pattern, constitutes a serious breach of trust between the victims of violence and abuse and the whole community; and finally,
7. The entire syndrome has its roots in Aboriginal historical experience, which must be adequately understood in order to be able to restore wholeness, trust and safety to the Aboriginal family and community life.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence occurs in all cultures; people of all races, ethnicities, religions, and classes can be perpetrators of domestic violence. Domestic violence is perpetrated by, and on, both men and women, and occurs in same-sex and opposite-sex relationships.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

This is the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing injury, harm, disability, or death; for example, hitting, shoving, biting, restraint, kicking, or use of a weapon.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

This can be use of physical force to compel a person to engage in a sexual act against their will, whether or not the act is completed. Or it could be an attempted or completed sex act involving a person who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act, unable to decline participation, or unable to communicate unwillingness to engage in the sexual act, e.g., because of underage immaturity, illness, disability, or the influence of alcohol or other drugs, because of intimidation or pressure, or because of seduction and submission. Finally sexual violence can manifest itself by way of abusive sexual contact.

PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE

This kind of violence often involves the use of threats of physical, psychological, sexual, or social violence that use words, gestures, or weapons to communicate the intent to cause death, disability, injury, physical, or psychological harm. It can take the form of humiliating the person, controlling what the victim can and cannot do, withholding all kinds of information, causing embarrassment in the victim or often creating isolation.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Domestic Violence

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Economic abuse occurs when the abuser has complete control over the victim's money and other economic resources. Usually, this involves putting the victim on a strict 'allowance', withholding money at will and forcing the victim to beg for or perform favours (often sexual) to receive the money. It is common for the victim to receive less money as the abuse continues. Often the abuser will not let the victim obtain employment or finish her education, both of which would allow her to escape from this kind of abuse.

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

This form of abuse uses the partner's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate them. It can also involve the prevention of the partner from practicing their religious or spiritual beliefs or the abuser will often ridicule or denigrate the other person's religious or spiritual beliefs.

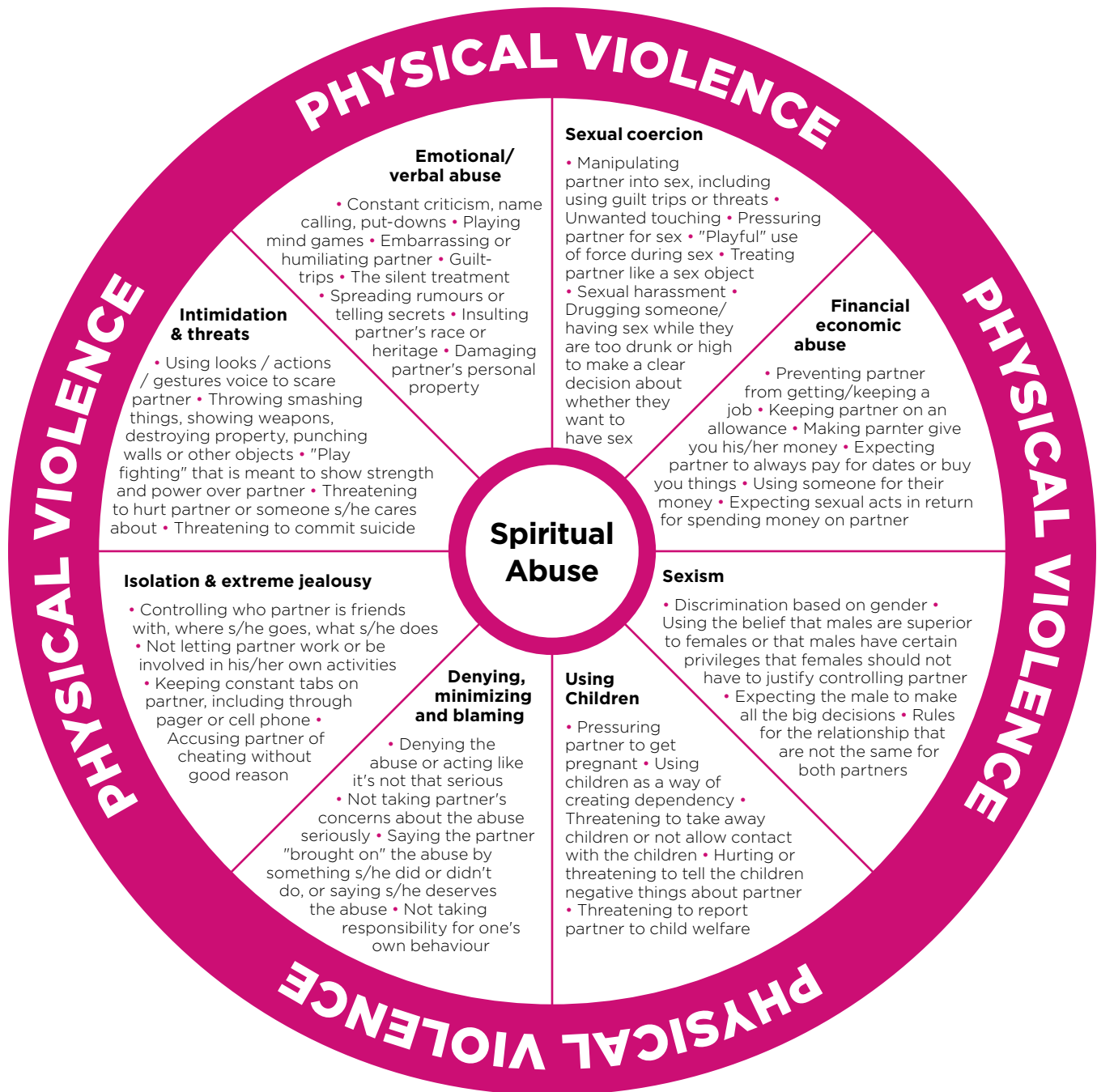
PARENTAL ALIENATION

This is a kind of subtle or hidden violence which uses children as a weapon of war by one parent to alienate the other parent. This is often seen in high-conflict marriages or relationships. In effect, parental alienation uses the innocent, unknowing child to commit relational aggression (the use of falsehood, secrecy and gossip) by one parent against the other. Sometimes both parents engage in parental alienation simultaneously. Parental alienation is often devastating to the alienated spouse(s)/parent(s) and to the alienating/alienated children caught in the middle. It is often a spectacularly successful tactic because so few people know how to detect it. It is often used because it is covert, leaves no visible scars and can be done with a smile. It destroys or damages the target's reputation and ruins the target's relationships.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Domestic Violence Wheel



RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Healthy Relationships

WHAT DOES A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP LOOK LIKE?

- You accept the other person as she or he is. You appreciate their unique qualities, such as shyness or a different sense of humour, and you do not try to "fix" or "change" them. If you don't like your partner's qualities, you shouldn't be with that person.
- Healthy relationships help people feel good, not bad, about themselves.
- In a healthy relationship you think highly of each other. You do not feel superior or inferior to your partner in important ways. You respect each other's right to have separate opinions and ideas and to express them without fear of retaliation.
- In a healthy relationship, you feel energized and alive in your partner's presence. You can play and laugh together. You have fun. You can enjoy intimacy.
- In a healthy relationship you do not fear letting your emotions show. You know the other partner will be sensitive to what you are experiencing and will support you throughout that process, whether it be anger, frustration, grief or loss.
- In a healthy relationship, you feel safe. You don't have to worry that your partner will harm you physically or emotionally, and you are not tempted to harm them. You can change your mind about something—like having sex—without being afraid of how your partner will respond.
- In a healthy relationship you can admit to being wrong, and you can resolve disagreements by talking honestly and directly to your partner.
- Healthy relationships celebrate success and support well-being.

Notes to Facilitator:

Using the flip chart the facilitator will seek to elicit responses from the group on what a healthy relationship looks like. The above noted points may come out during the discussion, or the facilitator may use them as prompts to generate further ideas.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Healthy Relationships

WHEN IS A RELATIONSHIP IN TROUBLE?

Using a three column page on the Flip chart the facilitator will note the following:

Feel Good /Healthy	Not Sure	Feel Bad/Unhealthy

Each group member will be asked to provide examples of what makes them feel good about their relationship and these will be noted in the left column. Once this is complete the facilitator will ask the group if everyone agrees that these are signs of a healthy relationship.

The facilitator will then, using each of the “good signs” ask the group what would be the corresponding symptom of an unhealthy relationship and so note that in the right column, directly opposite. Once all the healthy signs have been matched with unhealthy signs the facilitator will ask if there are any examples of what makes them feel bad about their relationship that is not already noted on the sheet. If there are new examples they will be noted in the right column and the corresponding healthy relationship example noted after class discussion.

Finally the facilitator will look at each “act” and obtain group views on what might be a middle action that the person is not sure is moving the relationship towards an unhealthy relationship. In other words a “warning action” that bears some careful scrutiny. These should be inserted until the chart is fully completed.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships



Healthy/Unhealthy Relationships

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN “REAL LIFE”?

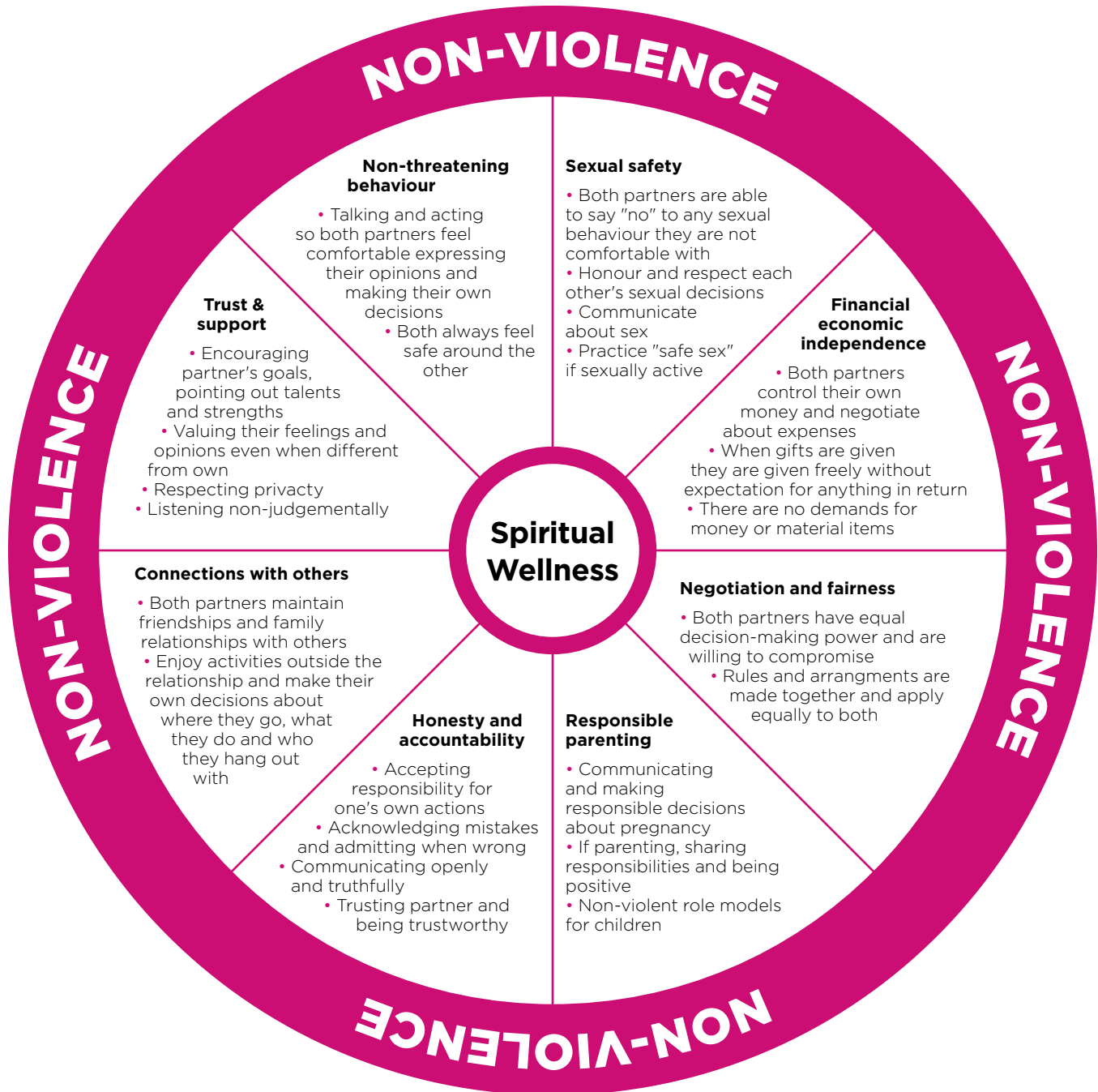
HEALTHY	NOT SURE/WARNING SIGNS	UNHEALTHY
Respectful and kind	Your partner criticizes you more and more often	Unkind and disrespectful
Trusting (You trust your partner and your partner trusts you)	Asks you a lot of questions about where you are going and what you are doing	Suspicious
Honest	Doesn't share any information about what he/she is doing	Dishonest and secretive
Supportive	Discourages you from participating in programs	Controlling
Fair and equal	Makes all the decisions about where you will live, your children, and what you will do	Dominating
Positive	Supports your efforts to effectively manage your substance use	Negative
Maintain your own identity	Your partner demands that you change the way that you dress or look	Pretending to be someone you aren't
Positive communication	Your partner doesn't listen or respond to anything that you say	Yelling and screaming most or all of the time
Fight fairly	Blames you for everything that goes wrong; doesn't take any responsibility	Hurtful, angry fighting
Resolve problems without violence	Threatens to hurt you or your children	Violent and dangerous

(For more information see Baker & Cunningham, 2005b, page 7)

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Non-Violence Wheel



RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Domestic Violence & Substance Abuse**IS THERE A CONNECTION?**

Notes to Facilitator: At this point lead the **group** in a discussion of a link between Domestic Abuse and Substance Abuse, from their personal observations, knowledge or experiences. Potential prompts that may be used include:

- Do you think there is a connection between your relationship with your partner and your substance abuse?
- Is substance abuse a part of your relationship? An important part?
- What impact do you think substance abuse and domestic violence has on the spirit?

A flipchart should be utilized to record the group's thoughts.

At the conclusion of this exercise the facilitator will mention that Health Canada produced a fact sheet, in 1993 on the connection between "Family Violence and Substance Abuse". Although it is almost 15 years since it was first published the information is important and we will provide you with a copy of it for your reading after class. That publication looks at the link between the victim's experience of family violence and substance abuse, and the link between the victimizer's substance abuse and abusive behaviour. It also considers such issues as:

- What is the nature of the relationship between family violence and substance abuse?
- Some Thoughts for Family Violence Victims, and
- Some Thoughts for Those Who Behave Abusively Toward Family Members

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships



INFOSHEET

Domestic Violence & Substance Abuse Infosheet

PURPOSE OF THE INFOSHEET

The goal of this infosheet is to provide some basic ideas for understanding the connection between family violence and substance abuse. Although a connection has long been observed, there has been confusion and debate about its nature and its meaning. Even the terms “family violence” and “substance abuse” have different meanings for different people. If we can understand the relationship between substance abuse and family violence, we can help to create safety and support for the people affected by these problems.

A FRAMEWORK FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is abuse of power within relationships of family, trust or dependency. It can include many forms of abusive behaviour:

- emotional abuse
- psychological abuse
- neglect
- financial exploitation
- destruction of property
- injury to pets
- physical assault
- sexual assault
- homicide.

The primary victims are women, children and seniors, including people with disabilities. Females are more frequently victimized than males and in most cases the perpetrators are male. These abuses of power are reinforced by traditional societal attitudes and maintained by existing barriers to social equality based on sex, race, age, class and disability.

A FRAMEWORK FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Substance abuse refers to the inappropriate use of any drug or mood-altering substance. It can result in personal, family, health, social, legal and financial problems. Substance abuse is use that occurs:

- too frequently
- in excessive amounts
- over a long period of time or
- in the wrong combination with other drugs.

Both legal and illegal drugs can be involved, including alcohol, prescription and over-the-counter medications, illicit drugs and solvents.

- Substance abuse can result in physical and psychological dependence or addiction.
- Substance abuse or dependence can affect a person's overall health and functioning – emotional, psychological and physical. Therefore, these problems must be addressed as specific issues, rather than as mere symptoms of other problems.
- The effect of a substance on a person depends on more than just the drug. People's behaviour under the influence of a drug can vary depending on factors such as age, gender, biology, personal beliefs and expectations, and social context.

MAKING THE CONNECTIONS

Family violence and substance abuse are problems that are complex and multi-faceted and this is further complicated when they appear together. Two major concerns are the *link between the victim's experience of family violence and substance abuse*, and the *link between the victimizer's substance abuse and abusive behaviour*.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships



INFOSHEET

Domestic Violence & Substance Abuse Infosheet

As victims

- Women abused in the past, or currently living with an abusive partner, may use alcohol or other drugs to deal with the pain, anxiety and fear of their situation.
- Adults who were abused as children may use substances to deaden the pain of past memories.
- Adolescents who have been abused or who have witnessed abuse may resort to alcohol or other drug use as a coping mechanism.

As victimizers

- Parents who abuse and neglect their children often have problems with substance abuse.
- Men who assault their partners often use alcohol or other drugs prior to the assault.
- Men who sexually exploit children have often engaged in substance abuse before or during the sexual offence and may use alcohol and other drugs as a way of luring and manipulating their victims.
- Victimizers may abuse substances to diminish their feelings of guilt or shame or to assist in denial of their acts.
- Those who care for seniors or persons with disabilities may give them excessive medication or withhold medication in order to control their behaviour.

Although they are often interrelated, not every person who experiences family violence will use substances to cope. Nor will everyone who abuses substances perpetrate family violence. When both problems occur together, each contributes to the other. Families in which both violence and substance abuse occur are sometimes referred to as dually affected families.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

Family violence and substance abuse are often “hidden” problems, and the association between the two has not been adequately researched. Several recent studies do, however, highlight connections between these problems.

- A survey of 2099 women found that women who had experienced abuse reported more frequent use of sleeping pills and sedatives than women who had not been abused.
 - 40% more battered women reported sleeping pill use.
 - 74% more battered women reported sedative use.
 - 50% more women physically abused as children reported sleeping pill use and *all* reported sedative use.
 - Women who were sexually abused as children reported two times greater sleeping pill use and three times greater sedative use.
- Research indicates that men who drink regularly are more likely to abuse family members.
 - Parental child abuse was six times more frequent among men who often drank to excess.
 - The national Violence Against Women Survey (1993) indicates that alcohol is a prominent factor in wife assault. In one-half of all violent partnerships, the perpetrator was usually drinking. The rate of wife assault for women currently living with men who drank regularly (at least four times per week) was triple the rate of those partners who did not drink at all. Women were at six times

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships



INFOSHEET

Domestic Violence & Substance Abuse Infosheet

the risk of violence by partners who frequently consumed five or more 3 drinks at one time, compared to women whose partners never drank.

- Studies about the use of alcohol and wife assault show a difference between reports by victims and perpetrators.
 - Ten studies reporting chronic alcohol use, alcoholism, or alcohol abuse reported that between 24% and 86% of battering incidents involved alcohol abuse. When batterers reported, the result was a combined average of 36% of battering incidents involving alcohol; when victims reported, the combined average was 67%.⁵
- A study of 712 street youth reported that many came from troubled homes where family violence and/or substance abuse were present.
 - 2 out of 3 of the street youth were using alcohol and/or other drugs daily or weekly, with the majority being moderate to heavy users.
 - 1 in 4 of the 321 female street youth described their first sexual experience as rape, perpetrated by male relatives or family friends.
 - 87% of girls and 27% of boys who were introduced to sex before the age of ten said rape had been their first sexual experience.
- Only recently has attention been paid to abuse of seniors. A telephone survey of 2008 seniors living in private dwellings reported that about 40 persons per 1000 had recently experienced some serious form of maltreatment in their own home.

- Regarding substance abuse 1 in 7 abusers was identified as having a drinking problem, and nearly 1 in 10 abusers was identified as having some other drug problem.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

What is the nature of the relationship between family violence and substance abuse?

- Although family violence and substance abuse frequently coexist, the exact nature of the relationship is not well understood. There are similarities between the two problems and the problems add to each other. The relationship is not directly causal—substance abuse does not cause family violence nor does family violence cause substance abuse. There are a multitude of factors that influence how a person will be affected by family violence and whether or not that person will be susceptible to substance abuse and dependence. However, the connection between the two problems is sufficiently strong to cause concern.
- Members of families in which one or both parents abuse substances are considered to be at high risk for physically abusing and particularly for neglecting their children.
- Persons who have experienced family violence are at greater risk for alcohol and other drug problems than those who have not.
- Evidence suggests that adolescents who run away from violent homes are at risk of further victimization and substance abuse as well as other problems.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships



INFOSHEET

Domestic Violence & Substance Abuse Infosheet

Why does the relationship occur so frequently?

There are many ways of looking at the connection between family violence and substance abuse. Here are some examples:

Self-medication – Alcohol and other drugs may be used to cope with the physical, emotional or psychological pain of family violence. It has not, however, been determined that victims who abuse substances do so solely as a result of their victimization.

Dis-inhibition – Alcohol or other drugs are seen as reducing behavioural inhibitions so that socially unacceptable behaviour such as aggression is more likely to occur. However, this does not adequately explain the choice of family members and vulnerable populations as targets of this aggression.

Learned association – These theories focus on the rules that regulate behaviour. We learn in our families and social groups that certain events or behaviours are connected and expected. For example, a person may learn to connect family violence and substance abuse by growing up in a family where they both occur. In addition, beliefs about the potential effects of a drug will strongly influence a person's actual experience of the drug. A belief that a drug will cause abusive behaviour will increase the likelihood of abusive behaviour.

Disavowal – This explanation is related to learned association. Often abusive individuals excuse their violent behaviour, and are even excused by their partners and other family members because they were drunk and “not in control”. It allows us to see the person as normal, but their behaviour as deviant.

Each of these theories has assisted in exploring the relationship of family violence and substance abuse. However, they can also be used to avoid the issue of accountability. Social attitudes and beliefs contribute to our tolerance of family violence and substance abuse. To have a significant impact on reducing these problems, we need a comprehensive understanding and a redefining of what we will tolerate.

What do family violence and substance abuse have in common?

While family violence and substance abuse can occur either separately or together, researchers in both fields report common characteristics. Regardless of differences of opinion among workers in both fields over whether substance abuse is a symptom of illness or a learned behaviour or whether family violence is a mental health issue or social problem, agreement does exist on many fronts. Family violence and substance abuse:

- are pervasive social and health problems
- cut across all demographic categories
- are potentially life-threatening
- are often intergenerational
- tend to become progressively worse
- affect all members of the family
- typically involve denial by all parties
- result in social isolation for individuals and families
- often lead to other kinds of problems (e.g. health, legal and financial).

When family violence and substance abuse occur together, the impact of each problem may be intensified. Despite similarities we need to recognize that each problem needs

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships



INFOSHEET

Domestic Violence & Substance Abuse Infoshheet

to be addressed separately, without assuming that addressing one will take care of the other.

problem does not necessarily eliminate the other. Assumptions of this kind will lead to continued risk for all involved.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Recognizing the link between family violence and substance abuse is vital if front-line workers are to provide effective services to families affected by both problems. That means service providers, whatever their area of expertise, need to be willing to work together. Philosophical and theoretical differences must be secondary to safety and cooperation. Truly effective service comes from knowing our limits and knowing how to network within the community.

While service-delivery-issues related to family violence and substance abuse are too extensive to be fully covered here, the following points may stimulate further exploration and discussion.

- Safety planning must always be the first priority when dealing with family violence and substance abuse. Workers must continually assess the level of risk for suicide, homicide and recurring violence.
- It is important that service providers look for both substance abuse and family violence and develop strategies to address both problems. The impact of these problems on all members of the family should be considered.
- Although these problems may appear to be directly linked, we must remember that they are distinct issues. Dealing with one problem does not necessarily eliminate the other. Assumptions of this kind will lead to continued risk for all involved.
- Victims of family violence who have alcohol or other drug problems may require additional support. Dealing with both problems may make it more difficult for the victim to leave a violent relationship and/or to stop abusing substances. Special attention must be paid to safety issues.
- The timing of various kinds of assistance is crucial in addressing these problems. The first priority is to ensure everyone's immediate safety and to address ongoing safety plans. Alcohol and other drug-dependency treatment should begin by putting supports in place for family violence issues. Therapy for family violence should not begin until the acute effects of substance abuse are sufficiently diminished.
- Family violence issues may influence decisions about treatment in the addictions field. For instance, safety may be enhanced by placing perpetrators of family violence in residential programs. Women, especially those who have been abused, can benefit more from specialized women's programs than from the traditional male-oriented treatment programs.
- Effective safety planning by family violence workers can be enhanced when the impact of substance abuse as a risk issue is fully appreciated.
- Recognition of the mental-health effects of child abuse, wife abuse and abuse of seniors has increased greatly in recent

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships



INFOSHEET

Domestic Violence & Substance Abuse Infosheet

years. There remains a concern that medications are often prescribed as the sole intervention for these problems. Unless underlying family violence issues such as safety and victim trauma are dealt with, drug dependency may result.

- Older persons may become victimized if they are not aware of the effects of unintentional misuse of drugs in combination with other drugs.

Treatment approaches in the family violence and substance abuse fields are sometimes so divergent that they are barriers to communication and cooperation. These differences can be tempered with the strength of similar backgrounds. Both fields were launched by grass roots movements that stimulated the development of programs and services. Their shared traditions of group support, friendship and strong commitments to prevention, public awareness and social policy development are foundations for collaboration and understanding.

Some Thoughts for Family Violence Victims

If you have been a victim of family violence, there are several issues about substance abuse that may be important for you to consider.

- Family violence does not necessarily stop when the abuser stops abusing alcohol and/or other drugs.
- Using alcohol or other drugs to cope with the effects of family violence can lead to further problems, including drug dependency and possibly increased vulnerability to violence.

- Both family violence and substance abuse problems often require assistance beyond the family for protection, support or treatment.

Attempting to deal with one problem without addressing the other can cause a false sense of security. In a crisis, contact your local police, child welfare agency or women's shelter for protection. For ongoing support or treatment, contact a family service or counselling agency or addictions program.

Some Thoughts for Those Who Behave Abusively Toward Family Members

If you have abused a family member, there are several issues about substance abuse that are important to you. If you have a history of abusive behaviour, intoxication will increase the likelihood and severity of your violence. Getting treatment for both substance abuse and abusive behaviour is important, as treating only the substance abuse is no guarantee that your abusive behaviour will stop. Children growing up in families where substance abuse or family violence is present, often repeat these problems as adults. Most people who threaten or harm others, especially family members, feel upset about what they did. There are programs that can help you stop behaving abusively and that can help you feel better about yourself. Contact a counselling program for men who batter, a family service agency, or an addiction treatment program. Remember to tell them about both the family violence and the alcohol or other drug abuse.

RESPECT & TRUTH

Learning about Healthy Relationships

Assignment & Reflections

WRAP -UP ASSIGNMENT

Next week we will be talking about how what happened to us as a child makes a difference in our ability to recognize and support a healthy relationship for ourselves and our children. As a parent there are often occasions when we are less than truthful and honest with our children. We don't mean those little white lies about "Santa" but rather the more serious lies. For example when your child asks how you got the black eye the answer is often "Mommy fell down" or when he asks where Daddy is, do you say "Daddy's sick?" Your assignment this week is to recall some of those lies told to you by your family. How did they make you feel then? How do you feel about these lies now that you are an adult?

REFLECTIONS

We know that this week we discussed some painful topics about unhealthy relationships and how they can differ from healthy relationships. Taking the Talking Stick the facilitator will lead the group in sharing his or her thoughts on what they received from this session and then pass the Talking Stick on to the next person until all participants have had an opportunity to share their thoughts.

CLOSING PRAYER

The Elder will be asked to close the meeting with a Closing Prayer.

WEEK

3

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now



Included in this section:

- Opening
- Key Messages
- Overview & Last Week
- Teachings: Honesty & Bravery
- Teachings: Path of Life
- Teachings: Eagle Feather
- Discussion
- Assignment
- Reflections
- Infosheet

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Opening

CLEANSING

The room and the participants will be smudged.
A participant will be asked to perform the ceremony this week.

INTRODUCTION OF ELDER

The Elder will be introduced to the group, welcomed by the facilitator and asked to say a Prayer and share some thoughts with the group on this week's theme, **Honesty & Bravery**.

ELDER PRAYER

The Elder will say a prayer and speak to the group.

WORDS OF WELCOME

The facilitator will welcome the group again this week and remind them of the ground rules and the use of the Talking Stick.

POSTING OF MEDICINE WHEEL

The facilitator will post the Medicine Wheel from Week One and will write in a section **Honesty**, and the Animal for Honesty, the **Marten**. In another section she will write **Bravery**, and the animal for Bravery, the **Bear**.



HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Key Messages

Witnessing or experiencing violent, unhealthy relationships as children may create distortions in how we view adult relationships and our perceptions of what is acceptable and appropriate behaviour.

KEY MESSAGES

There are some key messages we want you to take from this week's session.

- All people in the life cycle have a right to enjoy a relationship which is safe, supportive and nurturing,
- If we witness or personally experience violent or unhealthy relationships as a child, it may distort our perception of what is an appropriate adult relationship,
- Unhealthy relationships can lead to destructive coping mechanisms, such as substance abuse, acting out, suicide, as well as the ability to recover from these,
- Witnessing unhealthy, violent relationships can impact negatively on infants, children & youth, in both the short and long term.
- No matter what happened in your past, it is possible to move beyond your experiences and create healthy, happy relationships for yourself and your children,
- Young children are dependent on the environments that their mothers create,
- You have a responsibility to provide an appropriate environment for your child that is safe, healthy and happy,
- To be brave is to do something right even though it may not be popular with your children or your family.

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Overview & Last Week

PURPOSE

The purpose of this session is to provide the women of this group with an opportunity to speak with honesty and bravery about their childhood and the ways in which they may have witnessed violence within their community and how this may have affected them.

The idea that witnessing and/or experiencing violence has a potentially life-long, negative impact on children will be introduced.

The purpose of this session is also to provide an opportunity for participants to describe their vision of a healthy relationship and to develop strategies to create positive relationships for themselves and their children.

CONTEXT

For women who were raised in violent homes and who experienced unhealthy relationships, appreciating that they have the right to live in and with healthy, positive relationships, can be difficult. It is important to provide participants with the tools to build healthy, positive relationships.

LAST WEEK

Last week we asked you to think about the lies told to you as a child and how you felt about those lies then, and now as an adult. Please share with us your observations.

Notes to Facilitator:

On a flip chart record the kinds of lies reported by the group members. Ask each person as they complete their observations how did they feel about what had been told to them at that time, and now as an adult what do they think about the lie?

The facilitator should seek to elicit the contrasting responses as a child and as an adult. This will also be an opportunity to see how the group feels about the lies told and whether any had similar experiences as the person recounting the lie.

The facilitator will ensure that the group understands the key messages for this session and that the class will focus on how what happened to us as children can impact on our ability to know, understand and practice what is appropriate in relationships with others.

The group will be encouraged to participate fully in the session, while speaking with Honesty and Bravery to the group.

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now



WORKSHEET

Facts About Unhealthy Relationships

TRUE	FALSE	
		1. Aboriginal peoples are three times more likely to be victims of spousal violence than those who are non-aboriginal (21% vs. 71%)
		2. Non Aboriginal women experience more emotional abuse from either a current or previous marital or common law partner than do Aboriginal women.
		3. In one Ontario study, 4 out of 10 Aboriginal women had experienced violence in their relationships..
		4. The same study reported that an estimated 75% to 95% of women in some Northern Aboriginal communities have been physically abused.
		5. Thirty-seven per cent of Aboriginal women and 30 per cent of Aboriginal men reported experiencing emotional abuse (such as insults, jealousy, and the regular attempt to control and limit the activities and social relationships of one's partner) during the previous five-year period (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2001b).
		6. Twenty five (25) per cent of the Aboriginal women who experienced abuse indicated that children witnessed the violence.
		7. In cases where children witnessed spousal violence, they were more likely to witness assaults equally against their mothers and their fathers.
		8. Life threatening partner violence is the same in Aboriginal and non Aboriginal communities.

Notes to Facilitator: Distribute the above true/false quiz and give the group approximately 10 minutes to complete. Then review the answers with the group to see their responses. There should be discussion about the statistics as the answers are revealed.

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

FACILITATOR
INFORMATION

Facts About Unhealthy Relationships

TRUE	FALSE	
✓		1. Statistics Canada: A General Social Survey, 1994 and 2004 reported Aboriginal peoples are three times more likely to be victims of spousal violence than those who are non-aboriginal (21% vs. 71%)
	✓	2. A 2005 Statistics Canada profile on Family Violence prepared by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics and the 2004 General Social Survey on victimization reports that 37% of Aboriginal woman experienced emotional abuse from either a current or previous marital or common law partner in the 5 years period studied compared to 17% for non-Aboriginal women (17%)
	✓	3. The Health Canada study reported 8 out of 10 Aboriginal women had experienced violence in the relationships.
✓		4. The Health Canada study estimated 75% to 95% of women in some Northern Aboriginal community have been physically abused. This does not mean that Aboriginal women in the south do not experience abuse.
✓		5. A Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics report in 2001 stated that 37 per cent of Aboriginal women and 30 per cent of Aboriginal men reported experiencing emotional abuse (such as insults, jealousy, and the regular attempt to control and limit the activities and social relationships of one's partner) during the previous five-year period.
	✓	6. Actually fifty-seven per cent of the Aboriginal women who experienced abuse indicated that children witnessed the violence (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2001).
	✓	7. Juristic Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics states that in cases where children witnessed spousal violence, they were more likely to witness assaults against their moth-ers (70%) than against their fathers (30%).
	✓	8. Close to half (48%) of cases of partner violence in the aboriginal population are life threatening compared to 31% for non-Aboriginal populations. Public Heath Agency of Canada, FAQ

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Teachings: Honesty & Bravery

HONESTY

While **Truth** lasts forever it differs from **Honesty**, although many think they are both the same. Honesty is being able to see what your life really is through personal reflection. By examining what is occurring in your life in an **Honest** way you can make good choices where necessary. You are able to do what you want to make your life better.

BRAVERY

- Bravery is being able to continue on with life no matter what struggles we may face,
- It is being strong at heart (emotionally) as well as strong spiritually, and mentally,
- It is getting back up when we fall

In order to proceed with your Path of Life you will need to possess bravery, not only to acknowledge what has happened to you in the past, but what you will need to do to overcome those problems. One of the ways we can make progress is by modeling our own behaviour on those who are otherwise healthy and happy and are on their own Path of Life.

There will be a time when you have problems. So never let go what has been given to you by the Creator, especially Bravery. Each of us should remember that abuse is not a teaching. It is merely a distraction on our Path of Life, that teaches us something which we may use as we will.

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Bravery & Honesty

BRAVERY

- Bravery is sharing what we feel and not what we think they want to hear;
- Bravery is knowing who we are as a person and admitting that to others and ourselves;
- Bravery, understand it, speak it, live by it and you will feel its power.

Notes to Facilitator: Ask the group what they think **Bravery** is. As each person offers a definition write it down on the flip chart. Seek to provoke discussion on the forms that **Bravery** takes and see if the group agrees on the observation made, and if not, why not, in order to provoke discussion and dialogue.

HONESTY

- Is being able to keep life simple and speak the truth;
- Choose honesty and kindness as your guides and happiness will follow you;
- Honesty is being who we are not what we think others should want or see us as;
- Honesty acknowledges Mother Earth and living the good life she has to offer.

Notes to Facilitator: Ask the group what they think **Honesty** is. As each person offers a definition write it down on the flip chart. Seek to provoke discussion on the forms that **Honesty** takes and see if the group agrees on the observation made, and if not, why not, in order to provoke discussion and dialogue.

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Teachings: Path of Life

The Path of Life can be best described as the ideal path set out for each person to follow by the Creator. Although the path is set out, you, as free individuals, have the choice to take this path, or not.

The Path of Life is your potential life, lived in a good way. While you as an individual are recognized as an important part of Creation, with a Path set out by the Creator, your good life can only be experienced, or actually become a reality, if you make choices and take responsibility.

You and only you can make that Path real. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' time for you to start to actualize your path. Some start early, some late in their lives. It is important for you to remember that when you start is much less important than actually starting. Hopefully these sessions will assist you in starting that journey.

Of course there are many 'side paths' which can operate as distractions. These side paths are innumerable, and differ for each one of us. While some may be of benefit to you in your overall understanding of life, to do so you must return to the Path that leads forward.

It is often said that some people get lost on these side paths and run out of time. Here we hope that you will be able to find your way to your true Path and continue with your journey, as planned by the Creator.

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Teachings: Eagle Feather

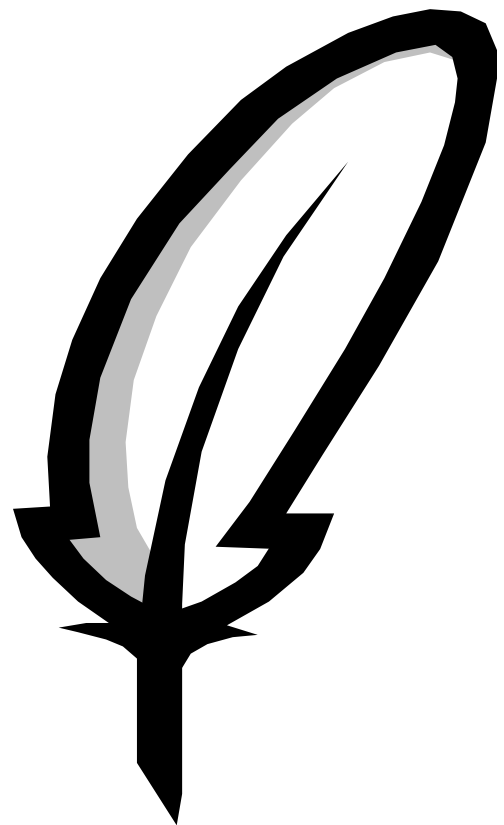
The eagle enjoys a position of great respect from Aboriginal peoples. In our teachings the eagle watches over us and our unborn children for the Creator. The eagle has given us his feather to help us understand the Path of Life.

Notes to Facilitator: Use either a real feather or the attached pictures of a feather to illustrate the following points.

The centre portion or main axis of the Feather is the Path of Life. You will note that it is much wider at the start (i.e. our births) and gradually narrows as it approaches the end (i.e. our death).

That mirrors our own existence with many potential choices in our infancy and gradually narrowing as we age. The Path appears finite and direct, but again the eagle teaches us a valuable lesson.

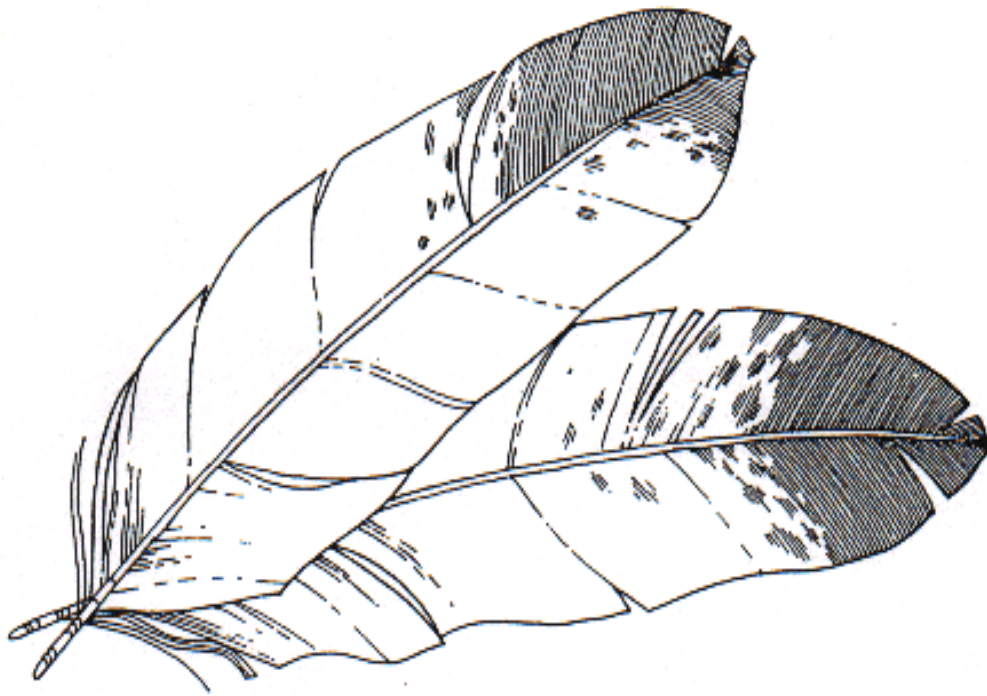
Now look at all the small growths off the main Path. They are too many to count and each represents a possible 'side path'. Some could be positive distractions and others negative. Meeting a teacher or a traditional healer could be a positive 'side path' whereas a substance addiction or destructive behaviour could be a negative 'side path'. Each of these 'side paths' appear to be dead ends, and in fact they can become dead ends, but only if you choose to let them become so. However they need not be dead ends but rather just distractions because each one leads back to the main path and you can make a choice to turn around.



HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Teachings: Eagle Feather



You also make a choice to learn from the experience and to leave that event behind you and accepting it as part of your life experience. But it must be you that makes that choice-not your counsellor, not your mother, not your sister and certainly not your partner-it must be you.

Today we will look at some of these negative side paths in your lives. Each of you have an eagle feather diagram with many side paths. I want each of you, with honesty, truth and of course bravery, to fill in as many of those side paths with the negative events that you have experienced in your life, starting from your childhood, to now.

This is your feather and if you choose not to share those experiences with us we will respect that decision. For those of you who are prepared to share we will discuss those experiences and what you have learned from them at the conclusion of the exercise.

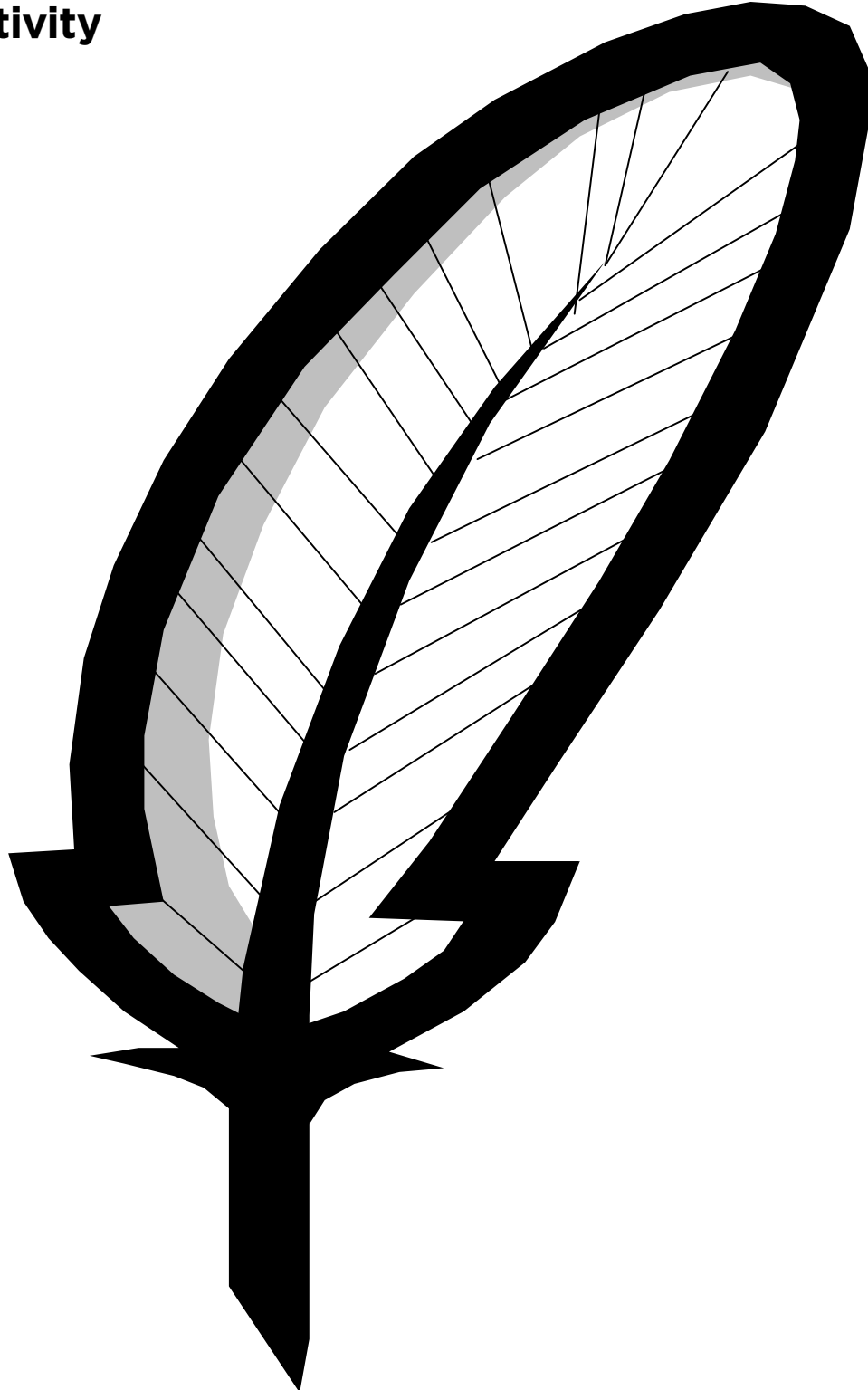
WEEK

3

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Activity



HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Discussion

Notes to Facilitator: After allowing the group about 30 minutes to complete their feathers, the facilitator asks someone to share a 'negative side path' with the class and discussion follows with others sharing similar experiences (a process of Catharsis). The facilitator will seek to guide discussion to cover such issues as:

- Do you remember your parents/caregivers fighting with each other?
 - What can you remember?
 - What did the fighting look like to you as a child?
- How do you think that witnessing violence as a child has influenced you as an adult?
 - Is it difficult for you to imagine or visualize a household that is not filled with chaos?
 - Do chaos, anger and unhappiness seem normal to you?
 - Can you imagine domestic relationships that are not filled with violence?
 - Do you think that there is a relationship between violence in your home and your feelings about yourself?
 - Do you think that there is a connection between witnessing and experiencing violence as a child and your substance use as a teen or adult?
- What do you think might have made a difference to you as a child? Have participants raise possible "protective factors" through talking about what might have made a difference to them as children.
 - Protective Factors:
 - An adult who cares about you
 - Responding consistently to your child when she/he cries or asks for help
 - Accept your child's emotions – all emotions are real for a child even if they don't make sense to you
 - Comfort your child
 - Younger children are often more negatively affected about experiencing family violence than older children so if you began to witness or experience abuse as a little child it may have had a more lasting influence than you imagine.
 - A desire to escape from the violent or unhealthy relationship may have been part of what led you to begin to use substances

The facilitator will list these on a flip chart as they occur during the discussion.

- Infosheet: Facilitator will provide class with Infosheet "What Happens When Children Live with Unhealthy or Violent Relationships?"

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Assignment

Now that we have looked at the negative side paths it is important to focus on moving from those experiences and to focus on creating healthy, happy relationships between you, your children and other significant people in your life. During this session we discussed the Grandfather Teaching of Bravery.

Assignment: Draw a name from group of participants. Write a note or letter or make a card to that person about a brave action or risk that they took during these sessions.

Notes to Facilitator:

Make a slip with each person's name in the group on the slip and have each participant select a name. They do not have to share that name with the person, unless they feel comfortable in doing so. Encourage each person to be truthful and honest in what they say to their fellow group member in the note.

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now

Reflections

The facilitator closes session by asking each member to summarize something that they learned about this week's session. The facilitator may offer any of the following observations to provoke discussion:

To get onto one's true Life Path steps must be taken to make a decision to turn away from negative side paths and it will take Bravery to make those kinds of decisions,

To accept responsibility for your actions taken,

To use honesty and truthfulness to acquire a full knowledge and ability to understand the actions and choices made to date in your life,

To understand the effect upon children and youth being exposed to unhealthy and violent relationships, and

To begin the journey of returning to the true Path of Life.

CLOSING PRAYER

The Elder will be asked to close the meeting with a Closing Prayer.

HONESTY & BRAVERY

What Happened When We Were Kids Matters Now



INFOSHEET

FACILITATOR
INFORMATION

What Happens When Children Live with Unhealthy or Violent Relationships?

What does it mean to “experience” violence?

- Actually seeing and/or hearing the violence
- Being put in the middle of the physical fighting or screaming and yelling
- Experiencing the physical, emotional and psychological repercussions of violence (For example, your mother was tired, afraid and angry so she didn't have the energy to cuddle you.)

When children experience family violence/unhealthy relationships, here are some possible side effects:

- Lower self-esteem
- Harder to make and keep friends
- More aggressive, “acting out” behaviour (especially boys)
- More withdrawn, “eager to please” behaviour (especially girls)
- Behaviour problems (70% of young offenders charged with crimes against people witnessed violence in their families)
- Anxiety and depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder:

Fear	Anxiety	Irritability
Difficulty Concentrating	Intrusive Memories	Angry Outbursts

There is evidence that these problems are stable. Stable means that you may still be coping with the consequences of having witnessed violence in your home when you were a child.

Sometimes children who grow up in violent environments engage in self-destructive behaviour, including:

- Self-mutilation (Cutting or burning)
- Frightening displays of rage
- Eating disorders
- Involvement in criminal activities
- Substance abuse
- Prostitution
- Suicidal or homicidal tendencies

Children do not have to actually see or hear fighting to be hurt by the violence. When adult relationships are unhealthy, relationships between the adults and the children in the family change even if the children don't actually see or hear the violence. This is the same as what can happen when a child experiences her mother's substance abuse without actually seeing it.

For example, a mother may be preparing to go on a crack run. For several days beforehand, she is edgy and excited. She may be less responsive to her child(ren) because she is thinking about the excitement/pleasure that is coming in the next few days. Then, when the time comes, she may disappear from home for several days. During this time, the child does not know where her mother is and may be cared for someone who she does not know well. The child worries about where Mum has gone and when or if she will return. When Mum does return, it may take some time before she is able to respond to her child as she comes down from the high. Even though the child has not actually seen the drug use she has certainly experienced the consequences of what happened.

NOTE: Distribute this page depending upon the literacy level of the group.

If it is not distributed, use the example as a component of the discussion during group session.

WEEK

4

HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child

Included in this section:

- Opening
- Key Messages & Overview
- Last Week & Activity
- Teachings
- Infosheet
- Assignment & Reflections



HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child

Opening

CLEANSING

The room and the participants will be smudged.
A participant will be asked to perform the ceremony this week.

INTRODUCTION OF ELDER

The Elder will be introduced to the Group, welcomed by the facilitator and asked to say a Prayer and share some thoughts with the group on this week's theme, **Humility**.

ELDER PRAYER

The Elder will say a prayer and speak to the group.

WORDS OF WELCOME

The facilitator will welcome the group again this week and remind them of the ground rules and the use of the Talking Stick.

POSTING OF MEDICINE WHEEL

The facilitator will post the Medicine Wheel from Week One and in one of the sections write the word **Humility**, and the Animal for Humility, the **Wolf**.



HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child

Key Messages & Overview

KEY MESSAGES

- No matter what happened in your past, it is possible to move beyond your experiences and create healthy, happy relationships for yourself and your children,
- Young children are dependent on the environments that their mothers create,
- You have a responsibility to provide an appropriate environment for your child that is safe, healthy and happy,
- Do something right is important and to do it with humility is even better for you.

OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for participants to describe their vision of a healthy relationship and to develop strategies to create positive relationships for themselves and their children.

Context

For women who were raised in violent homes and who experienced unhealthy relationships, appreciating that they have the right to live in and with healthy, positive relationships, can be difficult. It is important to provide participants with the tools to build healthy, positive relationships.

Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator will ensure that the group understands the key messages for this session and that the class will focus on how to build a healthy relationship for the participant and her child. The group will be encouraged to participate fully in the session, exhibiting humility in their discussions.

HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child

Last Week & Activity

The facilitator asks each person who is able/willing to share a key message from the Week Three lesson by revealing a situation during the recent past where they exercised either honesty or bravery with their children or partner. Then each participant will give their card or note to the person they picked. The facilitator will ask participants who are willing to share their note with the group, to read that note aloud.

The facilitator then will distribute another eagle feather diagram (same as distributed in the Week 3 Activity) and request the participants to complete as many of the side paths as they can with positive experiences in their lives, starting from their childhood to now.

The facilitator will explain to the group that this is their feather and if they choose not to share those experiences with the group they will respect that decision. For those who are prepared to share the facilitator will ask each person to discuss those experiences and tell the group what they have learned from them at the conclusion of the exercise.

Notes to Facilitator:

After allowing the group about 30 minutes to complete their feathers, the facilitator then asks someone to share a 'positive side path' with the class and discussion follows with others sharing similar experiences (a process of Catharsis). The facilitator should seek to bring out the positive emotions felt then and now from these positive side paths and contrast the participant's feelings now, as opposed to the earlier eagle feather exercise.

HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child

Teachings

Most of us have a vision of what we think is a healthy relationship with our child(ren). Others are more fortunate to have had an opportunity to see one in action. This week we will look at what makes up a healthy relationship and whether any aspects of that kind of relationship exist within your present relationships with your child(ren).

Parents should recognize that they are the first and most influential teacher for their children. If the parent is 'self-disciplined' the child will learn "self-discipline." If the parent loses control, the child will lose control. Humility is often learned by parents by how our children quote us and reflect our behaviour. Humility is about our ability and capacity to learn from all of Creation.

Real honest to goodness humility is about being modest (not showing or bragging of one's own importance).

Notes to Facilitator:

Using a flip chart the facilitator will ask participants their vision of a healthy relationship with their child(ren). In other words what characteristics are present? The facilitator will cover the following concepts during the discussion:

What would it look like?

What is important to you?

What would it feel like?

What behaviours would an outsider observe? (Prompts)

- *Kindness and Helpfulness;*
- *Good manners;*
- *Physically affectionate (hugging and kissing);*
- *Smiles and laughter;*
- *Happy children;*
- *Talking as opposed to screaming and yelling;*
- *Non-violence.*

HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child



INFOSHEET

Characteristics of Healthy Relationships

Partners like to spend time with each other

Partners share some likes and dislikes

Partners are NOT afraid of each other

Partners accept that they are different people and that they will not agree about everything

Partners feel comfortable in sharing their innermost thoughts and feelings without fear of a judgmental response

Partners support each other and help each other to be the best that they can be

Partners encourage each other to participate in activities outside the relationship

Partners share responsibility for raising their children

Partners share decision making

Partners trust each other

Partners are kind to each other

Partners are givers not takers

Partners know the difference between healthy disagreement and destructive arguments/fights

Partners appreciate that words can hurt as much as weapons and watch how they use language

HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child

Notes to Facilitator: *The facilitator will distribute and then discuss each aspect of the handout “Characteristics of Healthy Relationships”. Explore how it might manifest itself in each person’s relationships. It will be important to emphasize that there is no perfect relationship but that we are working to create relationships that work for each of us.*

The facilitator will then move to a closer and more personal examination of the participants’ own relationships. The facilitator will distribute the Worksheet “Have you experienced any of the following in your relationship?”

The facilitator will have participants complete the questionnaire by one of the following methods, depending upon how the group feels:

Ask the questions aloud and work through them one by one;

Or

Have each woman answer the quiz and then take up the responses together.

Ask participants to reflect upon why these traits may be contributing to an unhealthy relationship. Explore what traits are more important than others to participants as indicators of a relationship that is unhealthy for them.

Explore with participants what they are looking for in a relationship.

Provide sufficient time for responses and adequate discussion to allow each participant to express her feelings, bravely and with truth, honesty and humility.

HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child



WORKSHEET

Healthy Relationship Quiz

**HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING
IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP?**

YOU

- ☐ Can't be honest about your feelings and can't talk about them freely with your partner.
- ☐ Think that you can make your partner's problems go away.
- ☐ Are afraid of your partner's temper, so you avoid making him/her angry.
- ☐ Usually feel unhappy about the relationship.
- ☐ Can you say what you like or admire about your partner?

YOUR PARTNER

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Does your partner expect to be told where you have been when you're not with him/her? | ☐ Pressures you to do sexual things you don't want to do and puts you down when you refuse. |
| ☐ Yells at your children and doesn't want to look after them. | ☐ Does not support your decision to practice safer sex. |
| ☐ Criticizes your friends or family and asks you to stop seeing them. | ☐ Is your partner glad that you have other friends? |
| ☐ Decides how you spend your time together. | ☐ Is your partner happy about your accomplishments and ambitions? |
| ☐ Doesn't let you make any decisions. | ☐ Does your partner have interests besides you? |
| ☐ Puts you down and tells you that you are stupid or useless or ugly. | ☐ Does your partner take responsibility for her/his actions and not blame others for his/her failures? |
| ☐ Has threatened to hurt you or has hurt you even if he is sorry afterwards. | ☐ Are you and your partner friends? Best friends? |

HUMILITY—Recovering From My Past: Building Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child

Assignment & Reflections

ASSIGNMENT

Next week we will talk about the importance of positive environments for healthy brain development. We will also talk about building self-esteem and the importance of believing that you are worthy of a healthy happy relationship. The next Grandfather Teaching will be Wisdom.

We want you to think about this during the next week. Has your child ever taught you a lesson, or reminded you of your own words. Be prepared to share your experience and what it taught you.

REFLECTIONS

This week we have looked at various attributes of a healthy relationship and considered what was important for you and how would you feel in such a relationship. Finally we spent time looking at your relationship with its own strengths and flaws. Each of you are to be commended for your humility in recognizing what is an unhealthy relationship and what is healthy. We hope that that honesty, truth, bravery and humility continues. The facilitator will close the session by asking each member to summarize something that they learned about this week's session, perhaps something about the need for humility as a parent.

CLOSING PRAYER

The Elder will be asked to close the meeting with a Closing Prayer.

WEEK

5

WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour



Included in this section:

- Opening
- Key Messages & Overview
- Teachings: Wisdom
- Life Cycle Responsibility Wheel
- Child Development
- Assignment & Reflections

WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour

Opening

CLEANSING

The room and the participants will be smudged.
A participant will be asked to perform the ceremony this week.

INTRODUCTION OF ELDER

The Elder will be introduced to the group, welcomed by the facilitator and asked to say a Prayer and share some thoughts with the group on this week's theme, **Wisdom**.

ELDER PRAYER

The Elder will say a prayer and speak to the group.

WORDS OF WELCOME

The facilitator will welcome the group again this week and remind them of the ground rules and the use of the Talking Stick.

POSTING OF MEDICINE WHEEL

The facilitator will post the Medicine Wheel from Week One and write in a section **Wisdom**, and the Animal for Wisdom, the **Beaver**.



WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour

Key Messages & Overview

KEY MESSAGES

Healthy brain development depends on the child's journey through the life cycle beginning prior to conception. The way we interact with our children when they are infants and toddlers will impact them for the rest of their journey throughout the life cycle.

OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to provide information about a child's journey through the life cycle and how witnessing family violence may effect development and behaviour.

Cultural Context

It is important to provide participants with positive parenting strategies, building on an understanding of child development and recognition that a child's behaviour is not deliberately challenging/difficult but is the result of the experiences that the child has. The Seven Grandfathers teach us that to cherish knowledge is to know wisdom. Wisdom is the lessons we gain through life experiences. It is about learning from our mistakes. The best use of wisdom is helping people learn from their mistakes or misfortunes. Other sources of wisdom include our elders and our children.

LAST WEEK

Last week we asked you to think if your child ever taught you a lesson, or reminded you of your own words. The facilitator will ask the group to individually share examples of their humbling experiences and what they learned from those experiences.

WISDOM

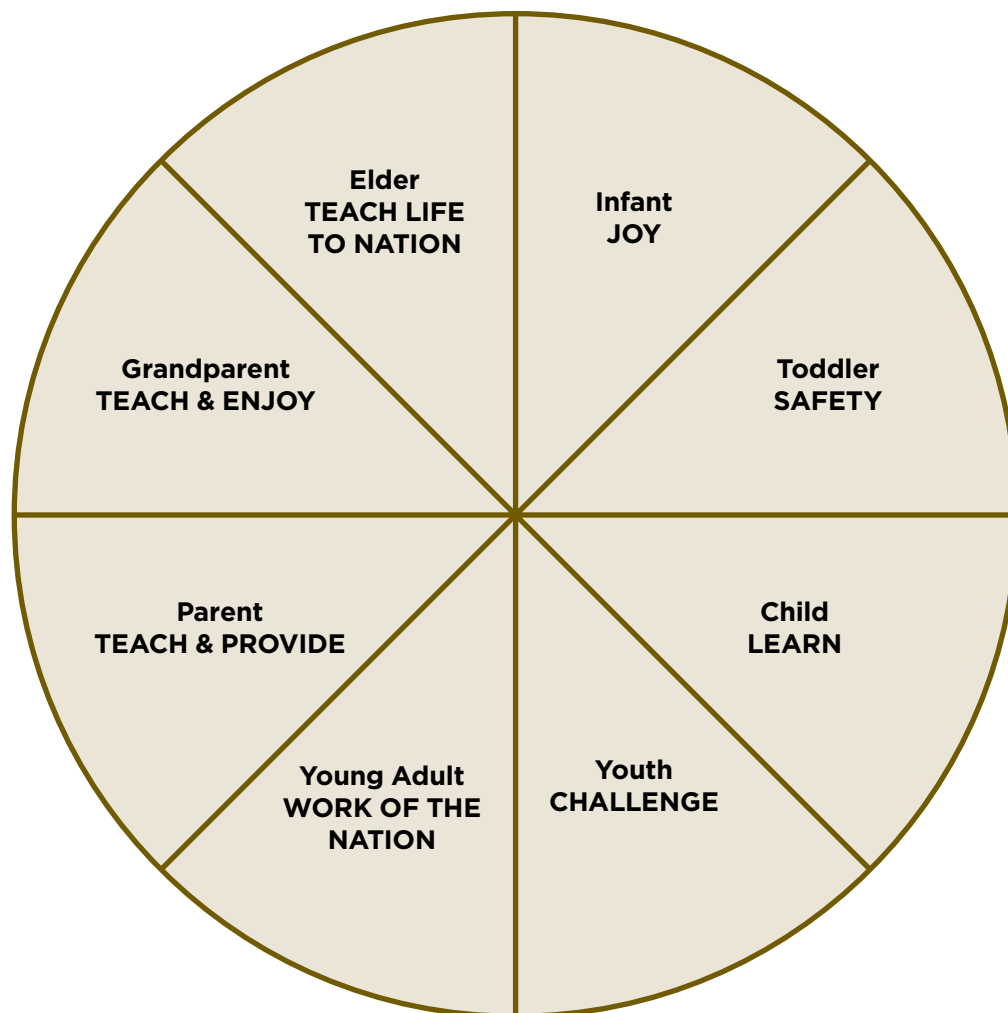
Child Development and Behaviour

Teachings

WISDOM

Wisdom is to know yourself as a sacred part of the Creation. Teaching and showing your people this lesson is one of the greatest gifts we can pass on to our nation. Each person should pass through and participate in each facet of the life cycle. Without having each of these 'experiences' a person has not experienced a full life cycle. Without these in our communities we are not a community. If all the young people have left our community, we are not complete. It takes all stages accepting their responsibilities to make a healthy community.

LIFE CYCLE RESPONSIBILITY WHEEL



WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour

Child Development**INFORMATION SHARING/TEACHING/DISCUSSION**

(Note: This session may take the form of a presentation to participants depending upon the level of knowledge about brain development and the impact of experiencing family violence.)

Using a flip chart, ask participants what they know about how children develop and the influences on their development—brainstorm ideas, understanding and beliefs.

Do you think there are differences in how children develop if they are exposed to family violence? Can you describe some of these differences? (Put these onto the flip chart)

The facilitator will then provide specific information about brain development and the importance of creating environments that support healthy brain development. The facilitator should stress that children are sacred gifts from the Creator, the child's spirit has chosen you as their parent and with that responsibility you will need great humility. Humility is to know yourself and your child as a sacred part of creation. It is our responsibility as parents and caregivers to support our children to develop to their fullest teaching and showing our children what is humility is one of the most beautiful gifts we can pass on to our children and nation.

The facilitator should have the group discuss the implications of this information on parenting of our children and be prepared to answer questions that flow from the material as it is presented.

WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour



INFOSHEET

Understanding how children develop and how their experiences shape their development and behaviour is helpful.

Brain Development (Adapted from Perry, 2004)

When children are born, their brains are not yet fully developed. In our first four years of life, our experiences will shape the way that our brain develops. By the time that we are four, our brain is 90% of the size that it will be when we become an adult.

How the brain develops:

- The brain develops in response to experiences; the environment is important
- The brain changes based upon the input that it receives; physical connections in the brain are made—or not made—through repetition
- Each brain is different and our experiences early in life determine how positively our brain will grow
- Once our children are born, there are two key factors that affect brain development:
 1. The environment in which the children live
 2. The food that they eat

Supporting healthy brain development	May put healthy brain development at risk
Consistent, predictable interactions	Unkind caregivers
Stimulating environment	Unpredictable, chaotic environments
Responsive relationships	Being ignored or neglected
Predictable, manageable stress	Too much stress
Healthy nutrition including the fats necessary to support the development of healthy brain function	Poor nutrition/not enough food

Continuous Stress

- When children experience on-going stress, hormones are released in their brain (cortisol) that have a long term impact on memory and brain function
- Younger children appear to be more negatively affected than older children
- The exposure to continuous stressors (such as experiencing family violence) can over-ride the positive interactions that lead to healthy development

When the brain is exposed to traumatic events over a period of time, what happens:

For babies and toddlers:

- Difficult to settle, anxious and unhappy (can be difficult for Mum)
- Loud noises and vivid visual images associated with violence are distressing

For school-age children:

- May be misdiagnosed as ADHD as PTSD symptoms overlap and there may be no knowledge of the family violence.
- May miss school due to injuries to themselves or their mothers.
- Trouble paying attention and concentrating
- Academic and/or social success or failure has significant impact on self concept.
- Children who witness violence may lose faith in themselves, others and their futures. Experiencing the world as unsafe, they fall into despair and give up hope that their needs will be met. This perspective interferes with school performance.

The most important protective factor for children exposed to violence is a secure relationship with an adult

WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour



INFOSHEET

The Stages of Development

Erik Erikson identified 8 stages of development. Each of us goes through these stages and our success in moving from one to another depends upon the experiences that we have in each stage. As mothers, we help our children move successfully through each of the stages:

BABIES: TRUST VS. MISTRUST

Needs maximum comfort with minimal uncertainty to trust himself/herself, others, and the environment.

Mum responds when baby cries so the baby trusts that Mum will be there.

TODDLER: AUTONOMY VS. SHAME AND DOUBT

Works to master physical environment while maintaining self-esteem.

Toddlers are starting to understand that they are separate from their Mums.

PRESCHOOLER: INITIATIVE VS. GUILT

Begins to initiate, not imitate, activities; develops conscience and sexual identity (being a boy or a girl).

Preschoolers need to know that they have control over their environments.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILD: INDUSTRY VS. INFERIORITY

Tries to develop a sense of self-worth by refining skills.

School-age children are learning that everyone is good at something.

ADOLESCENT: IDENTITY VS. ROLE CONFUSION

Tries integrating many roles (child, sibling, student, athlete, worker) into a self-image under role model and peer pressure.

Developing your own identity and deciding what you will share with others.

YOUNG ADULT: INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION

Learns to make personal commitment to another as spouse, parent or partner.

MIDDLE-AGE ADULT: GENERATIVITY VS. STAGNATION

Seeks satisfaction through productivity in career, family, and civic interests.

OLDER ADULT: INTEGRITY VS. DESPAIR

Reviews life accomplishments, deals with loss and preparation for death.

WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour



INFOSHEET

Helping Our Children Grow

Our job is to help our children be the best that they can be. It helps to understand how they grow.

Brain Development (Adapted from Perry, 2004)

When children are born, their brains haven't finished growing. What happens to a baby and toddler shapes the way the brain develops. By four, children's brains are 90% of adult size. This means that what happens in the first four years of life is very important.

There are two things that are very important:

- Healthy food
- Healthy environments

How the brain develops:

- The brain develops in response to experiences; the environment is important
- Physical connections in the brain are made—or not made—through repetition and experience—things that happen over and over again

When the brain is exposed to scary or traumatic events again and again what happens?

For babies and toddlers:

- Difficult to settle, anxious and unhappy (can be difficult for Mum)
- Might cry a lot
- Can be very aggressive
- Loud noises associated with violence make the baby cry or withdraw
- Might be very quiet or really withdrawn
- May avoid contact with parents

For school-age children:

- May be misdiagnosed as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) because symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can look like ADHD symptoms and school staff may not know that a child is experiencing domestic violence

Supporting healthy brain development (What does this look or feel like to a child?)	Putting healthy brain development at risk (What does this look or feel like to a child?)
Consistent, predictable interactions • When I cry, you pick me up	Unkind caregivers • You yell at me when I cry
Stimulating environment • You play with me, talk to me and sing to me	Unpredictable, chaotic environments • There is a lot of yelling, screaming and crying. I can hear it even though you think that I can't
Responsive relationships • When I smile at you, you smile back at me	Being ignored or neglected • Sometimes it takes a long time before my diaper gets changed
Predictable, manageable stress • When I meet a new person, you hold my hand to help me know that it is safe	Too much stress • Someone I don't know at all comes to look after me
Healthy nutrition • I get fed when I am hungry and the food is healthy • There is enough fat in my diet (whole milk) because my brain and nervous system needs fat	Poor nutrition/not enough food • Sometimes you forget to feed me regularly or the food is not very healthy

WEEK

5

WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour



INFOSHEET

- Might skip school
- Might miss school because they are hurt or because their mothers are hurt.
- Might feel sick a lot—might have physical symptoms that are real or pretend
- Trouble paying attention and concentrating
- Academic and/or social failure may make children feel badly about themselves—low self-esteem
- Children who witness violence may lose faith in themselves, others and their futures. Experiencing the world as unsafe, they feel very sad and give up hope. This interferes with school performance.
- May have trouble with relationships because the concepts of safety and danger get mixed up. Danger may seem normal and children and teens may feel more comfortable with dangerous relationships

The most important protective factor for children exposed to unhappy relationships is a strong connection with a caring adult

WISDOM

Child Development and Behaviour

Assignment & Reflections

ASSIGNMENT

Next week we will be discussing strategies that help us to support the development of high self-esteem and competence within ourselves. We will examine why our role as mothers is so critical to our children's healthy development, in order that any cycle of abuse may be stopped.

During the coming week we want you to think of any family activity you and/or your children have participated in that has become a tradition. You will be asked to share with us your memories.

REFLECTIONS

We have received a great deal of information this week about how children develop, and what negative activities can do to healthy development. I am going to ask each of you to tell the group what piece of information you heard today that you find the most important and why, to you, it is so important that you learned it. Perhaps you can share with us how you intend to implement that knowledge in the future.

CLOSING PRAYER

The Elder will be asked to close the meeting with a Closing Prayer.



WEEK

6

LOVE Building Self-esteem



Included in this section:

- Opening
- Key Messages & Overview
- Last Week & Teachings
- Worksheet: 8 Good Things About Me
- Goals & Decisions
- Worksheet: My Goals Wheel
- Infosheet: Affirmations
- Assignments & Reflections

LOVE

Building Self-esteem

Opening

CLEANSING

The room and the participants will be smudged.
A participant will be asked to perform the ceremony this week.

INTRODUCTION OF ELDER

The Elder will be introduced to the group, welcomed by the facilitator and asked to say a Prayer and share some thoughts with the group on this week's theme, **Love**.

ELDER PRAYER

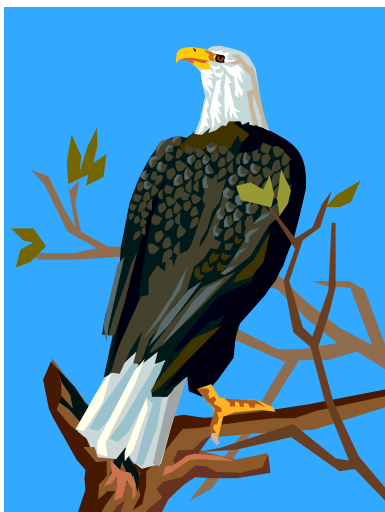
The Elder will say a prayer and speak to the group.

WORDS OF WELCOME

The facilitator will welcome the group again this week and remind them of the ground rules and the use of the Talking Stick.

POSTING OF MEDICINE WHEEL

The facilitator will post the Medicine Wheel from Week One and in a section the word **Love** and the Animal for Love, the **Eagle**.



LOVE

Building Self-esteem

Key Messages & Overview

KEY MESSAGES

- High self-esteem is critical to creating and sustaining healthy relationships.
- It is possible to increase your level of self-esteem.
- Self-esteem comes through being aware of what you know and respecting knowledge.

OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for participants to develop strategies to build and strengthen their own self-esteem.

Context

Self-esteem is an issue for many, if not all Aboriginals, including the participants in this group. Many participants in these sessions clearly and accurately see lack of self-esteem as a critical barrier to successful relationships.

For women who were raised in violent homes and who have experienced unhealthy relationships, believing that they deserve positive, healthy and happy relationships and interactions can be difficult. Strong self-esteem is a critical component to finding and maintaining healthy, positive relationships. It is also important that women identify goals for themselves that are separate and distinct from being in a relationship.

Notes to Facilitator:

The facilitator will ensure that the group understands the key messages for this session and that the group will focus on how to increase self-esteem in order to develop a healthy relationship.



LOVE Building Self-esteem

Last Week & Teachings

Last week we asked you to think of one of your families' traditions or activities and the reason or purpose behind it. As I go around the room I would ask you to share your recollection of that activity with the group and tell us how it made you feel, either positively or negatively.

TEACHING

As adults it is important to recognize how our history impacts our behaviour, but we are told it is never too late to change. Aboriginal people were seen as visionaries, and like every nation we believed each day offered an opportunity to change. Every morning we would greet Grandfather Sun with an offering of tobacco and thank our Grandfather for the new day and for the opportunity to create change as the new day presents itself. This also applies to the Grandmother moon which controls the waters, and is directly related to women's cycles, and the cycle of change. The Grandmother Moon has seen everything that has happened to women down through the ages and is seen as carrying the wisdom of women. Every 28 days we see our Grandmother change, and become full. Hence this is directly related to the cycle of change, and providing that opportunity to become full of what life has to offer.

The Grandfather Sun rises every morning and the Grandmother Moon shines every evening. The Sun and the Moon role model a strong relationship between the two of them and they reinforce the fact that at each day and each evening they continue their responsibilities, whether there is stormy weather or clear skies. Even though it is cloudy out we know that behind the clouds that Grandfather Sun is still shining. Just because we can't see the Sun or the Moon doesn't mean they are not fulfilling their responsibilities.

As Aboriginal people we need to recognize that Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon offer us that light that provides us the vision we need to make change in our lives. In order to create change we need to have a vision for ourselves and how we want to continue our lives as the new day presents itself. People have roles and responsibilities, and everyone was given a gift. Just because we don't recognize, or see what our gift is, doesn't mean it doesn't exist. The Sun and the Moon teaches us each day is an opportunity to utilize what the Creator gave us, and to visualize what we want for ourselves and our children.

LOVE Building Self-esteem

Perhaps the most significant gifts that a parent can give a child are a sense of competence, a sense of accomplishment and the belief that she or he is loved unconditionally. Supporting the development of these attributes in a child(ren) can be a challenge for women who do not believe that they are competent, accomplished or worthy of unconditional love.

Women struggling with substance abuse, many of whom have experienced and/or witnessed unhealthy and possibly violent relationships, often feel that what they are most successful at is failing. This can make it difficult to communicate more positive and supportive messages to their children.

Notes to Facilitator: After the Teaching the facilitator should commence a group exercise on self-esteem. Start the discussion by asking the group “What does self-esteem look like?” On a flip chart record their observations. Possible prompts for the facilitator include the following:

- Value yourself
- Not willing to settle
- Capable
- Confident
- Good communication skills
- Problem-solver.

In order to build these skills and attributes the facilitator will then distribute the “8 Great Things About Me” Wheel. The facilitator will provide the group approximately 10 minutes to work through the wheel, having the participants identify eight great things about themselves. Support the women to focus on positive decisions or actions that they have made, hopefully as a result of these sessions. Upon completion of the exercise have those that are willing, share their “8 Great Things About Me” with the rest of the group and be supportive.

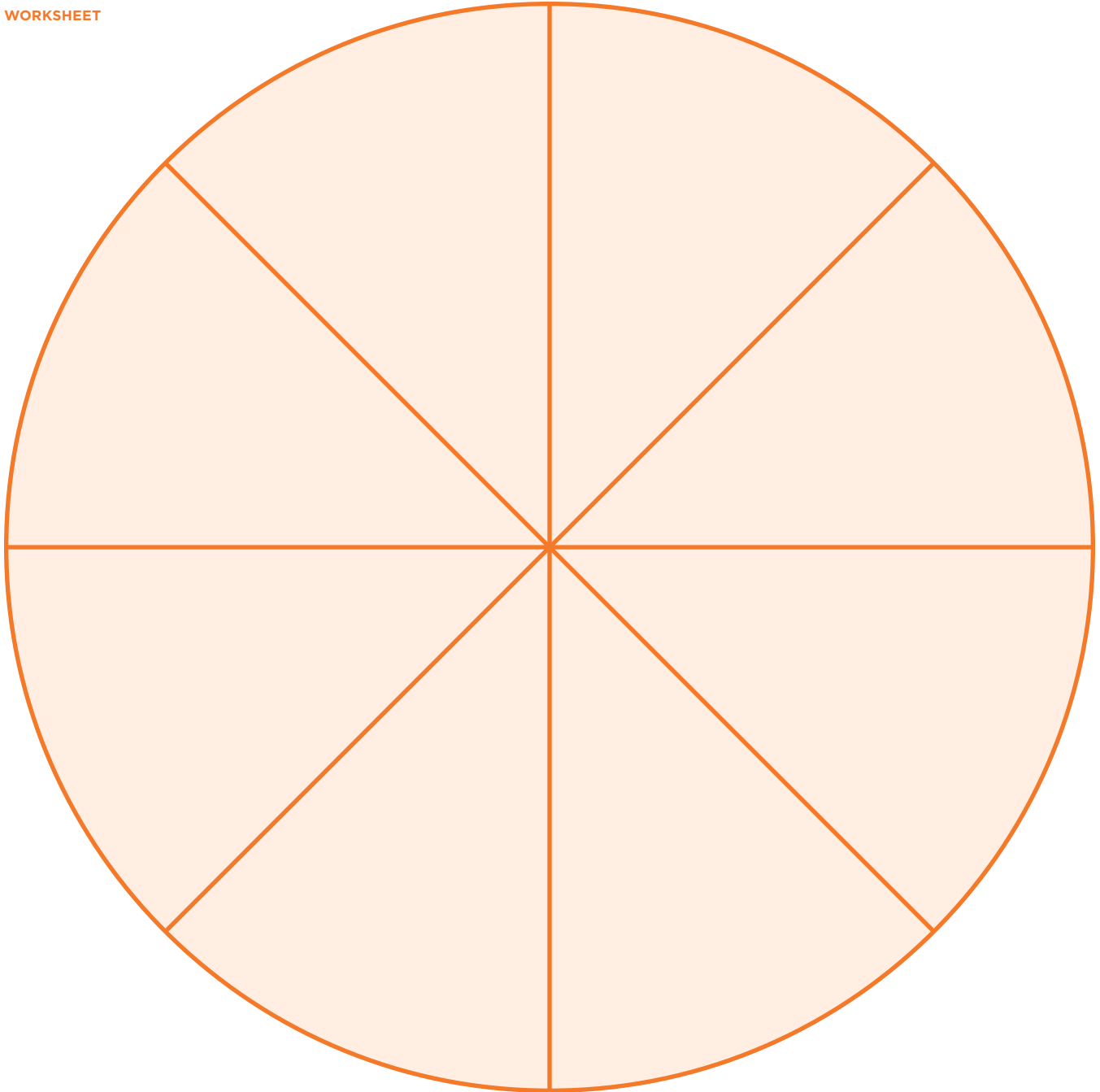


LOVE
Building Self-esteem



WORKSHEET

8 Good Things About Me



LOVE

Building Self-esteem

Goals & Decisions

SETTING GOALS AND MAKING DECISIONS FOR MYSELF

Whether or not we are in a relationship, it is important that we look after ourselves, make plans for our lives, and take action on things that are important to us. It is important that we learn to take care of ourselves.

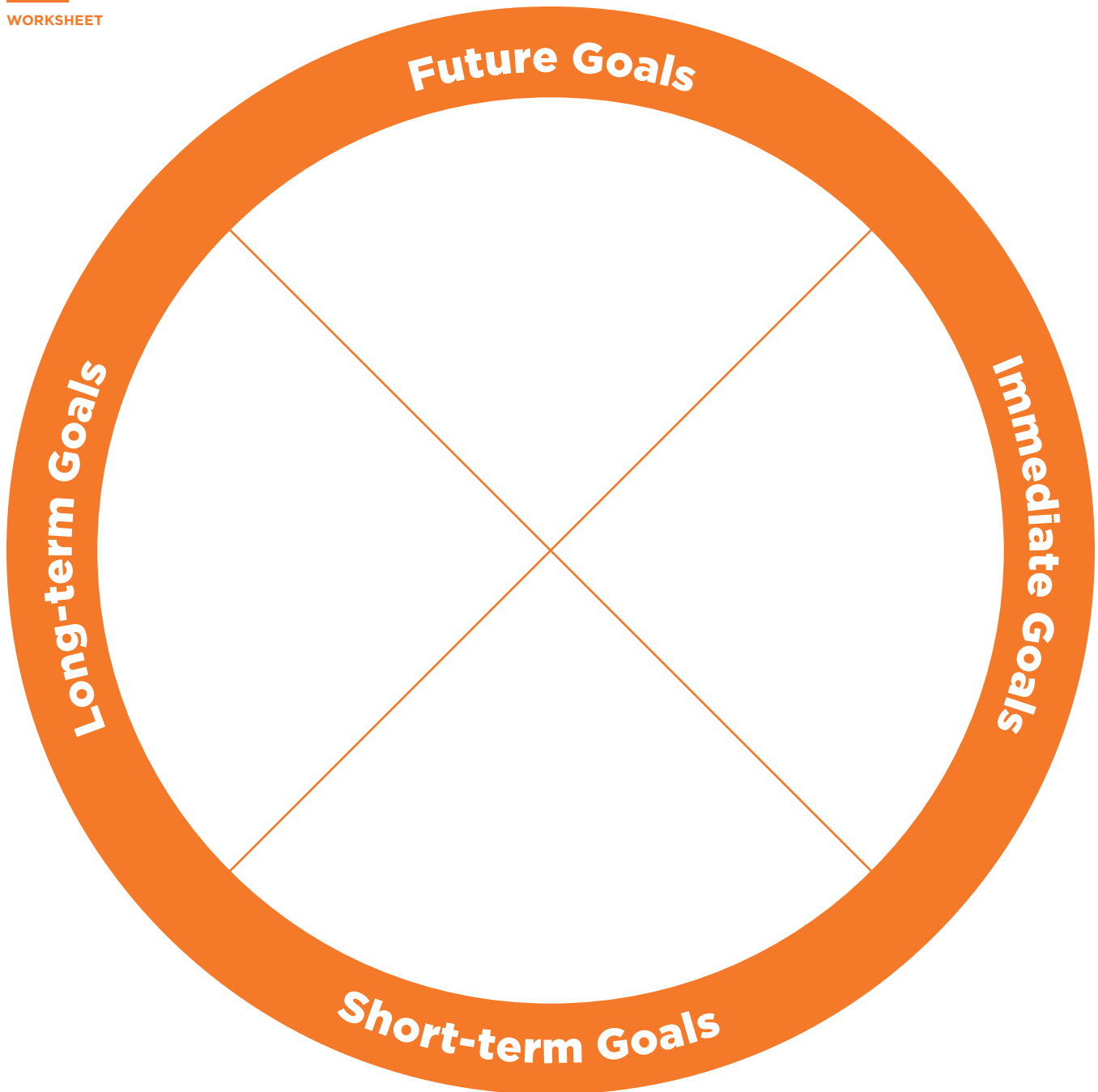
But change, while easy to say, is often difficult to do. Demonstrate the difficulty in making change: The facilitator will ask individuals to cross their arms, and will ask how it feels, individuals may say comfortable, natural and normal. The facilitator will then ask participants to re-cross their arms, but with the opposite arm on top. The facilitator will demonstrate, and ask participants how it feels, individuals may say uncomfortable, not normal and different. The facilitator will state that change will be uncomfortable because it is different, and will confirm that it is possible.

At this point the The facilitator will distribute the “My Goals Wheel” worksheet. The facilitator will ask participants to close their eyes and ask them to visualize what they want to do within the next couple of days. The facilitator will ask participants to visualize what they hope to accomplish in the next 48 hours. The facilitator will support participants to think about their vision for themselves, that is immediate (within the next couple of days), short-term (within the next 28 days), longer-term (more than three months away) and future (within the next year). The facilitator will then ask participants to open their eyes and write down what they saw in each of the goal statements.

The facilitator will ask participants if during their visualization process if they came across any barriers to reaching their goals. (If so the facilitator will ask the participants to visualize overcoming the barrier).



My Goals Wheel



LOVE

Building Self-esteem



INFOSHEET

Affirmations

1

I am a gift of the Creator and I am worthy of the respect of others and myself.

2

I will bravely meet the challenges that come my way and bounce back quickly from temporary setbacks.

3

I feel warm and loving toward myself, and I am doing the best that I can do for myself and my children with humility.

4

I am responsible for myself and for the decisions I make and I am honest about my choices.

5

I have wisdom to know it is not what happens to me, but how I handle it, that determines my emotional well being.

6

I am willing to face the truth about myself and my life and learn from each part of it.

7

I am a good friend and trustworthy.

8

I am gentle and take care of myself and ask for help when I need it.

9

I am constantly learning and growing from my life experiences.

10

I recognize my responsibilities within the life cycle and I always have something to offer.

Notes to Facilitator: Distribute the "Building Self-Esteem:Affirmations" Infosheet and review the list with the group. Ask each participant if there is a statement that she would like to add to the list or if there is one of the statements that mean a great deal to her. Write the additional statements on a flip chart.



LOVE Building Self-esteem

Assignment & Reflections

ASSIGNMENT

This week we have stressed how important it is for you to believe that you are a valuable person, who is important to her child(ren) and worth being treated with respect and care. Hopefully you have acquired the wisdom to appreciate that you are a special person, important to the Creator, your family and your community.

Next week we are going to talk about our children and what our relationships mean to them. We will also talk about strategies to build strong self-esteem in our children.

ASSIGNMENT

Have each participant describe one good thing that she is going to do for herself in the next week and come back to the circle prepared to share. This should not cost money, or it could even be something you enjoyed as a child.

REFLECTIONS

Most of you have had many experiences during your life that have taught you many valuable lessons. The point is whether you learn from those lessons and move forward in your Path of Life.

We would like each of you to tell the group in your own words what about Love you learned this week and will use from this point forward.

CLOSING PRAYER

The Elder will be asked to close the meeting with a Closing Prayer.

REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

**Included in this section:**

- Opening
- Key Messages & Overview
- Teachings
- Activity
- Infosheet or Facilitator Information: Building Competence and Self-esteem in Children
- Worksheet: Four Great Things About My Child
- Worksheet: Ways to Show My Child I Love Her/Him
- Review
- Evaluation



REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Opening

CLEANSING

The room and the participants will be smudged.
A participant will be asked to perform the ceremony this week.

INTRODUCTION OF ELDER

The Elder will be introduced to the group, welcomed by the facilitator and asked to say a Prayer and share some thoughts with the group all that has preceded this week.

ELDER PRAYER

The Elder will say a prayer and speak to the group.

WORDS OF WELCOME

The facilitator will welcome the group again this week and remind them of the ground rules and the use of the Talking Stick.

POSTING OF MEDICINE WHEEL

The facilitator will post the Medicine Wheel from Week One and review once again all the sections with the Seven Grandfather Teachings and the animals located in each section.

REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Key Messages, Overview & Last Week

KEY MESSAGES

- When we feel good about ourselves it is easier to help our children feel good about themselves,
- Children with high self-esteem are more likely to succeed at school and in their relationships,
- When our children know that they are loved, they grow up knowing that they are valuable and worthwhile

OVERVIEW

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for participants to develop strategies to build and strengthen their relationships with their children with an emphasis on supporting the development of healthy self-esteem and competence in their children.

We will also review the lessons we have learned from the preceding sessions, share a feast as well as our thoughts.

LAST WEEK

Last week we asked you to do something good for yourself. Please share with us what you did, and how it made you feel. The facilitator should ask each participant what they learned from doing the activity.

REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Teachings

Traditionally Aboriginal people recognized the importance of self-esteem in an individual's development. A parent was told not to yell at their children because it would damage their spirit, and if a child did not feel safe on Mother Earth the child would return to the Creator. Hence, we were told to be careful not to hurt a child's feelings. Stories were given as a way to correct a child's behaviour indirectly, and not to tell a child they were bad, because we were told that what you expressed out loud or thought about, is what the child became. Children were encouraged in the community by reinforcing positive behaviour and not giving attention to negative behaviour.

Today we use the Smudge bowl (Shell) to represent that new spirit and how it comes all shiny and new. When we smudge, it represents cleaning that spirit and trying to keep our spirit shiny and bright, like that newborn baby. As parents it is our responsibility to ensure our child's spirit retains that shininess. We know that if we have been hurt or abused our spirit develops some defences to protect it, so we may become rough and crusty like the outside of the Smudge bowl. The Smudge bowl reminds us to fulfill our responsibilities to look after our spirit, so we can ensure we keep our children's spirits clean and that they continue to shine.

The Seven Grandfathers teach us about Love, that it is important to love others, your family members, your partner, your extended family and most important your children. Show them kindness and respect, be ever friendly and do not judge them on their behaviours.



REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Activity

Demonstrate to participants using a large heart made from cardboard.

Ask the participants if they think children are born with all the self-esteem they need or are they an empty heart that we fill up? Participants may say either and the facilitator will ask why, and state that traditional teachings tell us that children come complete with a full heart. If they had a “Good Life” in the Womb, they will come with their heart full of self-esteem.

The facilitator will then prompt participants. What happens if the mother took drugs while she carried the child in her womb, or drank alcohol, or failed to take care of herself in a proper manner? Ask the group what they think happens to the child. A good thing or a bad thing? As they answer each question with a “bad thing” cut off a piece of the heart, to show how it will affect the child.

The facilitator will describe a situation where the mother brings the baby home, but there are no family supports present and she is tired and goes to sleep, but the baby is hungry and cries and the mother ignores the baby. The facilitator asks, “How will this affect the baby?” As the comments come on the negative effects possible the facilitator will cut off a small piece of the heart. The facilitator continues this discussion through different ages, and stages of development, (using examples such as yelling at the child, improper discipline, lack of warmth and nurturing, etc.) until the participants are able to connect how we as parents directly impact upon our children’s self-esteem.

The facilitator will then hand out the “Building Competence and Self Esteem in Children” to the participants and review it with the group. Then the facilitator will ask the group to brainstorm possible strategies to build self-esteem and confidence within their children. Using the flip chart the facilitator will record the suggestions.

REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children



INFOSHEET

Building Competence and Self-Esteem in Children



FACILITATOR
INFORMATION

DEFINING SELF-ESTEEM: HOW MUCH A PERSON LIKES, ACCEPTS AND RESPECTS HERSELF

Help children feel competent and capable

Give children opportunities to make developmentally appropriate choices:

- “Would you like to wear your yellow sweater or your pink sweater today?” (Toddlers)
- “Which story would you like to read together today?” (Toddlers and preschoolers)
- “Would you like an orange or an apple for snack today?” (Toddlers and Preschoolers)

Set up opportunities for children to succeed:

- Label plastic bins so that children can tidy up. Use pictures for toddlers and preschoolers
- Encourage children to try new things (simple puzzles for young children, painting or colouring, running or jumping)

Do things with your child

- Roll a ball back and forth to each other (Toddlers)
- Have children help with simple tasks at home: when you are folding laundry, have your older toddler or preschooler match up the socks
- Make meals together

Meaningful Praise

Praise children for what they do and accomplish. Be specific.

- “You did a great job tidying up”
- “You built a really tall tower with your blocks”
- “Good job cleaning your teeth”
- “You ate all your carrots. Good for you”

Listening and Talking

Actively listening to children gives the message that they are important to us and that they have something meaningful to say.

- Make time to listen
- Make eye contact
- Repeat back what the child says to be sure that you understand what she is saying
- When little children are hard to understand, stop what you are doing and listen anyway, even if you don't understand everything that is be said

Respectful talking

- Separate who your child is from what your child does: “I love you because you are a great kid. It is not ok to hit your brother”
- Match your body language to your words
- If you happen to lose your cool, say “I'm sorry”
- Tell your children you love them... every day

REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Activity**Notes to Facilitator:**

Have each participant complete the worksheet “*Four Great Things About My Child(ren)*”. In each section of the Wheel they will write down something that their child(ren) does that they think is great. For example what is a physical thing the child does that they think is great (i.e. can run fast); or an emotional thing (i.e. laughs a lot).

If there are participants who aren’t comfortable writing, do the activity through the medicine wheel which participants fill in with pictures representing the child’s talents/gifts, etc.

Encourage the participants to focus on great things that their children can actually do to reinforce the importance of promoting a sense of competence in their child(ren). Participants may want to share their thoughts with their children or with the group if their children are not available.

What makes us feel loved?

Using a flip chart or white board, ask participants to identify what makes them feel loved.

Follow-up by asking what actions and words participants believe help their children to feel loved. Document the responses using a flip chart or white board.

Loving Our Children:

Distribute the handout “*Ways to Show My Child I Love Her*”. Review the list and then ask each participant if there is something that she does to show her child(ren) that she or he is loved and add it to the list.



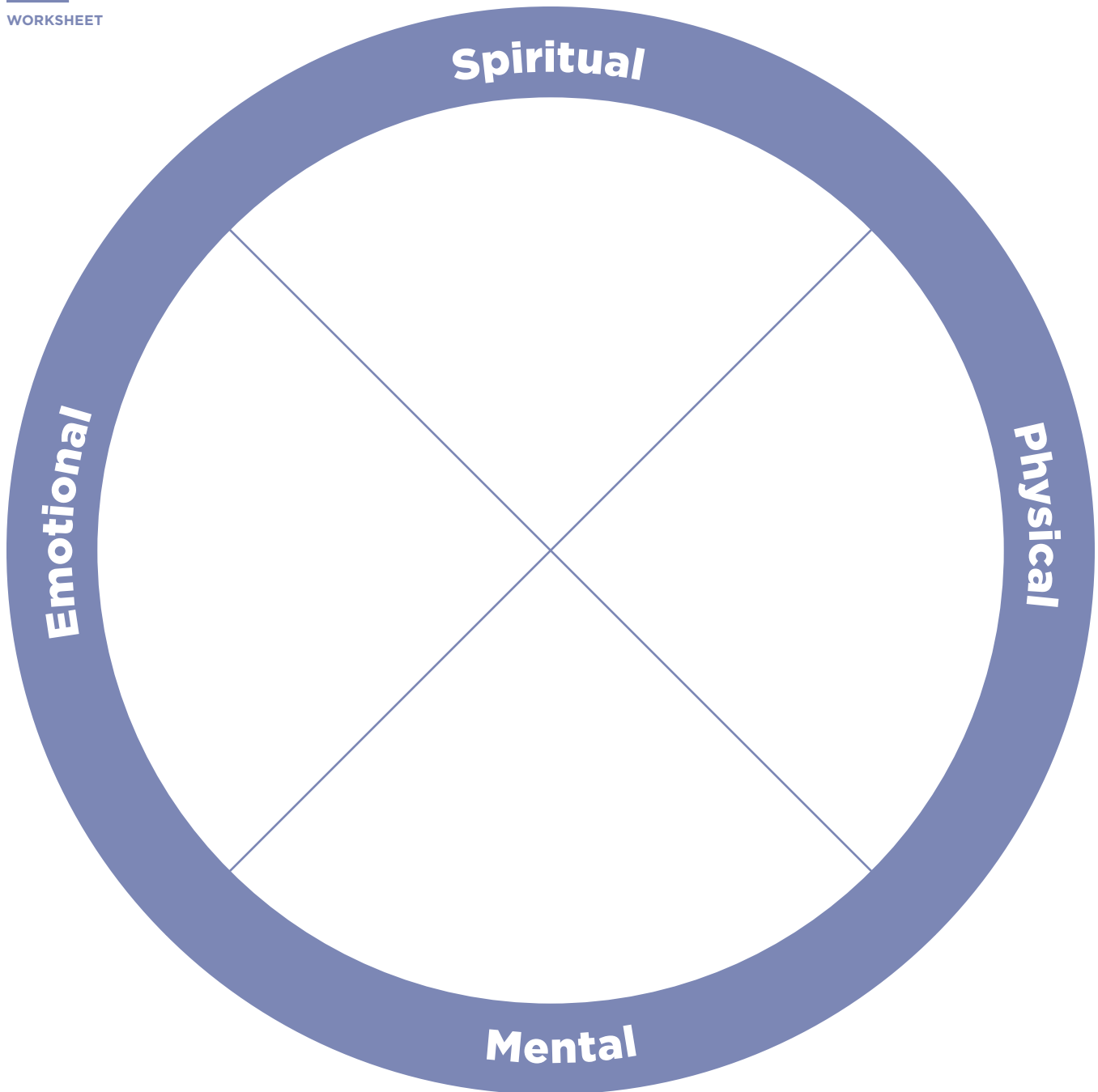
REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children



WORKSHEET

Four Great Things About My Child



REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children



Ways to Show My Child I Love Her/Him

- Hug your child—lots
- Say thank you when your child does something helpful
- Take your child to lunch
- Play with your child
- Read an extra story with your child
- Sing songs with your child
- Make your child's favourite food
- Listen to your child
- Set limits for your child
- Say "I love you"—lots
- Take recovery seriously
- Look after yourself

Three Special Ways to Show My Child I Love Her/Him:

1.

2.

3.



REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Review

Have each participant describe one great thing that she is going to do for herself in the next week. Have each participant describe one great thing that she is going to do for her child(ren) next week.

Take a moment to review the key messages of the groups from beginning to end:

WEEK 1: Seven Grandfather Teachings

WEEK 2: In this session we learned about Healthy Relationships, including “Everyone has the right to a Healthy Relationship” and “Unhealthy Relationships come in many forms” We looked at “**Respect**” and learned that it is very important to show others that you honor them or that you hold them in high regards, as you do your own grandmother. We looked at “**Truth**” and saw that it is important to be true in all that you do. Be true to your fellow human beings and to yourself - always speak the truth, no matter how difficult it may be.

WEEK 3: In Week Three we learned that what happened when we were children matters now. Witnessing or experiencing Unhealthy Relationships as children can make it difficult for us to recognize what Healthy Relationships look like” For “**Honesty**” we learned that we should treat others in a good way, as you would wish to be treated. Making good, honest decisions will make you feel good in your heart. For “**Bravery**” we learned that often we need bravery and courage to accomplish things in the most difficult of times.

WEEK 4: During Week Four we focused on Recovering from our past and building Healthy Relationships for us and our children. We looked at “What does a Healthy Relationship look like?” and “What do I need to have a Healthy Relationship?” The Teaching on “**Humility**” helps us to learn that self-worth is important, but it is more important to remember that we are all equal. There is no one among us who is any taller, we are all of equal height.

REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Review

WEEK 5: For this session we looked at Child Development and Behaviour, including “How our children develop” and “How we support healthy growth for our children.” For the teaching on “**Wisdom**” we saw that it is important for you to learn all that you can about everything that is going on in the world: Learn about past problems (History); Learn about scientific projects; farming methods; Past and present methods of healing the sick and different ways of education. When you have learned all of these things, then you should go back to your people to help them to live a better life.

WEEK 6: For this week we discussed building self-esteem. That included “Believing that we are worthwhile is important to having Healthy Relationships” and “Building Our Self-Esteem” The teaching was about “Love” and we saw that expressing our love for our children and celebrating their strengths and their weaknesses was important for their development and well being.

WEEK 7: This week it was all about Positive Parenting including “Building self-esteem in our children and creating Healthy Relationships with our children.”

Notes to Facilitator:

At this point break the group into smaller components, such as two or three people and have them discuss what they learned from the teachings and what was most important to them and why. They should record their views on a flip chart. They should be given an amount of time to carefully discuss what stood out for them.

When the group has completed the exercise, each will be encouraged to share their thoughts with the group, while holding the talking stick. The facilitator will see if others agree with the observations or felt similarly.

REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Review

The use of the Seven Grandfathers in your daily lives will help to bring you back to your Path of Life and aid you as you assist your children on theirs.

The Teachings have been given to you and you have a right to do what you will with the Teachings. Hopefully you will choose to use them for the benefit of yourself and your children, now, or at some point in the future when you are ready to do so, but it is your choice as to the timing or whether you do so.

Should you carry out our responsibilities as shown in the Life Cycle Responsibility Wheel you will enjoy the love, caring and connections we all work for in our relationships. Hopefully you will have made some significant relationships within this group and will continue to build those relationships.

Since this is our last group together and we are interested in your feedback about what you have liked, what you would have liked to talk about, what would you change, what would you do the same? We ask you to complete the questionnaire before you leave and we thank you for your participation, your strength and determination to work on your issues. You are all beautiful people in the eyes of the creator and we really appreciate meeting and talking with you.

ELDER PRAYER

The Elder will say a closing prayer one final time.

Notes to Facilitator:

Our Elders teach us that there must be a balance in all relationships. In the past seven weeks each participant has been asked to bare her soul by discussing difficult issues in her life. All this has been at the prompting of the facilitator. To balance the wheel it is important for the facilitator to provide a feast for the participants and to offer some small gifts to each person, including the Elder, and to thank them for their participation. The facilitator should provide the food and serve each participant and at the opportune time exchange the gift.



REFLECTION

Positive Parenting: Building Self-esteem in Our Children

Evaluation

What i liked most about the course was ...

What i liked least about the course was ...

What i would have liked to talk about was ...

What i would change about the course is ...
