

NATIVE



FACETS

Columbia University Cancer Prevention Curriculum

NATIVE FACETS

*F*amily, friends, food and fun are all related to me—I will learn to make
*A*ctive healthy choices to prevent
*C*ancers associated with unhealthy lifestyles—and by
*E*ating wisely, exercising and not smoking—I will embrace life and learn to be
*T*hankful for my
*S*urvival and happiness as a Native American

Reducing Cancer Risks Among Native American Youth

**A Native American Culture-Based Curriculum For the Prevention of Certain
Cancers Associated with Tobacco Use**

FOREWORD

Cancer threatens the well-being and lives of Native people across America. Rates of cancer are unacceptably high among Native Americans and successful treatment rates for those who have fallen victim to cancer are far below comparable rates for whites. What can we do about combatting cancer among Native people?

The National Cancer Institute has helped to answer this question by sponsoring several research studies aimed at learning more about cancer among Native Americans. We were fortunate to be selected for that sponsorship. In carrying out our study, we learned vital information about the best ways to prevent cancer among Native American youth. As delighted as we are with the results of our research, we are even more excited about the response we received from the collaborating Native American communities. Their cooperation, enthusiasm, and tireless support have been impressive. On behalf of Columbia University and the National Cancer Institute, I want to extend my thanks for a job well done. Let's continue the battle against cancer in Native American people. We will not stop until we have scientifically proven methods for helping Indian youth completely avoid cancer from tobacco use and poor dietary habits. That is our goal. Together with your help, we will accomplish it.

Steven P. Schinke, Professor

Columbia University School of Social Work

INTRODUCTION

Native F.A.C.E.T.S., a project funded in 1990 by the National Cancer Institute, aimed to reduce cancer risks among Native American adolescents. Developed by Columbia University School of Social Work in partnership with Native Americans from urban and rural communities in the Northeast, the project studied *interventions* to prevent cancer among younger Native Americans. Native youths between the ages of 8-12 years old were recruited to participate in the program which took place in their community after school or on weekends.

To ensure a community-based focus, Columbia University staff worked directly with health and social service providers and representative members from the Native community to develop the curriculum. During intervention delivery, local storytellers and other Native American role models shared their knowledge and experience to enhance the cultural health concepts introduced by the site group leaders.

By encouraging the Native youths' decision-making skills, the results suggest that the project had a positive impact on youths' ability to make healthy lifestyle choices. In fact, youths' scores were significantly improved after participating in the project, especially where cultural reasons for not smoking or chewing tobacco were concerned.

The curriculum has several goals. First, to promote Native youths' awareness, integrity, knowledge, and self-determination concerning their immediate and long-term health. Second, to reinforce Native Northeast cultural knowledge, values, and ancestral history related to healthful living. Finally, the curriculum's experiential, multi-disciplined approach to delivering information about cancer and its relationship to diet and habitual tobacco use teaches youths to increase their sense of self-determination.

The curriculum has 15 sessions, with the final session culminating in a community presentation by the youth participants. During this community presentation, participants exhibit the various projects and journals produced over the intervention, share highlights from the curriculum, and perform a short skit about healthy dietary and lifestyle practices.

Each curriculum session addresses general principles about how the body and mind work in relation to the social environment. Traditional Native American stories are included to promote cultural awareness. In addition, artistic and creative projects throughout the curriculum reinforce the lessons. A theater performance, for example, helps youths to refine their public speaking skills.

Purpose of the Curriculum

Delivery of the Curriculum

Need for the Project

These experiences provide participating youth with an enjoyable mix of learning and activity, while simultaneously encouraging a sense of cultural continuity and open dialogue about preventive health practices.

Increasingly, Native Americans across the U.S. face cancer as a major health risk. Cancer is the third leading cause of death among Native Americans overall, and the second leading cause of death among Native Americans over age 45. Cancers of the stomach, liver, cervix, uterus, breast, gall bladder and kidneys are on the increase in many Native communities. This curriculum promotes the health philosophy historically echoed throughout Native America, and is informed by the need to maintain a balance in our physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual connectedness.

Outcome Goals

Selected by the collaborating Native organizations, trained group leaders were primarily responsible for delivering the curriculum to participating youth. Group leaders were trained in a comprehensive week-long program led by curriculum developers, Native and non-Native educators, social workers, and performance artists.

Over the course of this five year study, we successfully implemented three separate skills interventions for reducing Native youths' cancer risks associated

our study are available through written requests to Professor Steven Schinke, Columbia University School of Social Work, 622 West 113th St., New York, NY 10025.

Sessions were held once a week for 15 weeks after regular school hours and beginning with the start of the fall term school year. Locations for sessions varied with participating community organizations or program sponsors. Transportation of youths to and from sessions was arranged by the group leaders, with assistance from the sponsoring organization.

All sessions were scheduled to last one hour, with fifteen additional minutes allotted for clean up before returning the youth home. Group leaders were responsible for ensuring the safety of the participants. At least ten hours per week were reserved for group leaders to prepare and plan for each session.

Typical Session Format

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SESSION ONE

SKILLS

- Students will gain knowledge about tobacco use and abuse.
- Students will be made aware of the importance of Native American culture as a way of reinforcing healthy lifestyles.

ACTIVITY

Introduction of Program
Goals & Purposes:
Healthful Learning
Native American
storytelling traditions

MATERIALS

TV/VCR
Video Tobacco, "A Gift of Choice" (18 minutes)
Healthy snack

TOPIC: Tobacco and Native Americans

OBJECTIVES

- Provide a complete overview of the program and expectations, describing in detail the typical session format and general information, including parental consent forms and desired outcomes regarding cancer prevention and healthy lifestyle practices.
- Present the program's guiding principles-
NATIVE FACETS.
- Encourage Native American values and beliefs about health by learning from their ancestors. Use storytelling as a way of sharing important values, and guiding principles for living.
- Encourage the students to take an active role in identifying good health practices and cultural values.
- To initiate student interest they will watch a video program titled, "Tobacco, A Gift of Choice" involving peer understanding of traditional tobacco use among Native Americans.

GROUP LEADER PRESENTATION

To begin, have the youths sit in a circle on the floor or in a circle of chairs.

Group leader and assistant will introduce themselves to every child, going around the circle, shaking hands with each child. You can say for example: "Hello my name is (name of Group Leader). I am from the (your tribal affiliation or nation)." "What is your name?" (Say the name of the youth,) "(Name of youth), what Nation do you belong to?" "(____), welcome to our circle and I hope you will enjoy the program." Give them a sense of belonging to a special group—a part of the FACETS circle. Explain that when they come to the program they are coming to a special circle, when they break the circle by being disruptive and inattentive, they are affecting everyone in the circle.

Explain that this program was especially developed for them and their participation is voluntary however, a parent or guardian must give them permission to participate.

Explain that the project will consist of 15 meeting sessions. They will meet either one or two times a week depending on the site. The first six sessions will be concerned with healthy food choices and eating habits. The following seven sessions will be concerned with tobacco and alcohol use prevention. At the end of the program youth will share what they have learned by giving a presentation to the community. This is a special opportunity for sharing, thinking about your future, and working together on several projects including a mural and theater games.

The program's guiding principles are:


- F: Family, friends, food and fun are all related to me—I will learn to make
- A: Active healthy choices to prevent
- C: Cancers associated with unhealthy lifestyles—and by
- E: Eating wisely, exercising and not smoking –I will embrace life and learn to be
- T: Thankful for my
- S: Survival and happiness as a Native American

or, Native FACETS

Early in the program group leaders may encourage the youths to create a poster outlining the Native FACETS program and hang it on the wall. Provide examples for students to use in creating such a poster with magazine pictures and Native designs or symbols. Provide them with a variety of art supplies so they can create their own unique message.

Group Leaders should give each child time to introduce and talk about him/herself. One option is for the youths to interview the person sitting next to them(name, age, grade in school) and to go around the circle to give each student an opportunity to introduce one another.

Group Leaders explain to students that they will



hear about a variety of Native American practices through traditional stories. Suggest to the youths that they might think about developing one of the stories into a theater or skit performance for their final presentation. The purpose of this program is to plant seeds of knowledge and to teach the skills with which the youth can implement that knowledge. Explain that many of these stories began with the first people. As they are retold, some have been updated for the purposes of accessibility, but the theme is unaltered. The stories encourage living properly to nourish a healthy spirit. Explain to the youths that they too will have an opportunity to share their own stories based on their life experiences.

Native American Storytelling

Native American storytelling goes back a long way in our history. The stories teach us about survival and about human values. Small pieces of information are contained in each story and every person hears something different in these stories—that is part of their value. Their value also lies in each listener’s ability to remember and pass them on. The storytelling chain will never break as long as someone carries the story forward. In the past, many people were willing to become storytellers. Today, we depend on TV, radio, and the movies to tell us stories. Taking the time to learn a story seems hard, because we live in a fast-paced world. The speed in which we look at pictures or hear the news tends to contribute to forgetfulness too.

SESSION TWO

ACTIVITY

Read “The Great Gift, Tobacco” (a story from the Six Nations) in anthology.

Have a discussion about the meaning of “sacred.”

MATERIALS

“*Anthology of Native American Tobacco Traditions*” (Copies are available through written requests to Professor Steven Schinke, Columbia University School of Social Work, 622 West 113th St., New York, NY 10025.)

Handout: Smoker’s Interview Form

Healthy snack

*TOPIC: Native Americans and their Storytelling:
The Great Gift, Indian Tobacco*

OBJECTIVES

- Youngsters learn that stories and storytelling are central to the lives of Native peoples of North America.
- Youngsters learn that Native American stories are entertaining and powerful teaching tools.
- Youngsters learn that stories offer insight into how Native Americans explained the unexplainable, i.e.: the creation of plants like tobacco.
- Youngsters learn that tobacco was considered sacred by Native peoples. They learn that tobacco was and is still used in Native American religious ceremonies, as offerings, and as medical treatment.

GROUP LEADER PRESENTATION

Group Leader introduces term **expert**.

First ask the youngsters to define *expert*. Then explain that an expert is someone who knows more about something than almost everyone. Ask how someone becomes an expert. Draw out responses that emphasize gathering and analyzing information. Explain that most experts have to find out or learn a lot on their own—through