

YOUTH SPIRIT PROGRAM



Chapter 1: The Importance of Tradition & History



The goals of this chapter

...are to introduce and discuss the history of the Swinomish Totem Pole, a traditional Swinomish concept used to frame daily life and teach life skills, and a schedule set by nature that the Swinomish Tribe's livelihood revolved around. Information about alcohol is also included.

Age Groups: Middle and High School Youth

Time: 45 minutes

Youth will:

- learn the concept of the Totem Pole stories and how they can teach us about the Swinomish Way of Living
- learn about the importance of traditional Swinomish protocols

*Optional - Make their Totem Pole with cultural or family teaching and skills (or just anything they feel is important) that they do not want to forget or lose over time

Materials

- Whiteboard/flipchart + marker(s)
- Youth Handouts
- A print-out of the booklet, "The Swinomish Totem Pole: Tribal Legends"
- list of Native Youth Support Resources from We R Native (<https://www.wernative.org/resources>)

Preparation

- Preview Lesson plan
- Preview the Handouts for this lesson to determine what is most appropriate for your youths' levels and your goals. Print enough copies of the lesson handouts for each youth and small groups

Cultural Component Option(s)

Note: additional time needed for this activity

Materials

- Whiteboard/flipchart + marker(s)
- Youth Handbook
- A print-out of the booklet, "The Swinomish Totem Pole: Tribal Legends"

Preparation:

- Consider inviting guest speakers to 1) intro Totem Pole book, 2) Assist with Totem Pole Creations



Welcome & Group Check in

10 minutes

Welcome youth, introduce yourself, have guest speakers and youth introduce themselves and direct youth where to sit.

Say, "Today we're going to talk about how to take care of ourselves and our community: who we are, who we will become, problem solving, defining our values, improving relationships and how to give and get support.

Say, "Youth have a lot to deal with. The purpose of the Youth Spirit Program is to teach you skills that might help youth cope with life's challenges and for you to live your best life. This curriculum was developed specifically for Swinomish Youth by Swinomish community members, and includes ways of teaching healthy values and goals, Swinomish culture and traditions, and the blending of two cultures."

Ask a guest speaker(s) to start the lesson with a blessing.

Icebreaker

Time Varies

Say, "This is a space for us to share our knowledge with each other. Our elders and myself have knowledge to share with you, but each of you has wisdom to offer the group and us, as well. Your ideas, questions and knowledge are valued, so please feel free to share some of your wisdom. We want to know what you think and how we can make this the best experience.

Say, "Let's start by getting to know each other. Let's go around the room and introduce and state one interesting fact about ourselves. This can be a hobby, something that you like to do, your favorite subject in school, your favorite meal, or something you're good at."

Go around, until everyone has an opportunity to share.



Group Agreements

15 minutes

Say, "Let's talk about how we want to build our community and our relationship with each other in this program."

What are some group agreements we can make together that will help us all feel safe, respected, supported and able to share and learn in this group?"

Note student responses on flip chart paper/ large wall stick-note paper. Be sure responses include:

- *No put downs*
- *Leave your bad mood at the door*
- *Respect each other's opinions*
- *No interrupting*
- *No talking while other people are trying to talk*
- *Everyone has the right not to answer*
- *There are no dumb questions*
- *Laugh with others, not at them*
- *What's said here stays here*

**If needed re-write, but keep youth's original language. Have these agreements posted (either virtually or physically) every time you meet.*

Ask the group if they can all agree to make sure they are all onboard with the group agreements and have youth sign (either physically or with virtual tools - e.g. annotation feature).



Mandatory Reporting & Sensitive Topics Clause

Say, "I want to note one of the exceptions to confidentiality on our group agreements. If a someone shares information that they may be in potential harm, either harming themselves or others, I, as your facilitator and as a mandated reporter, have a legal responsibility to report this information. It's not to get anyone in trouble, but to make sure that you and others are safe. Does anyone have any questions about this?"

Say, "Also, before we dive into the content of this program, we want to acknowledge that some participants may be dealing with past or present challenges in their lives related to some of the topics we are going to cover. Different people handle and cope with challenges and trauma in a lot of different ways, and that's okay. I am here to support anyone who needs assistance and to provide them with resources that can hopefully offer help."

Say, "Thank you for creating this list of group agreements to help keep our group safe and supported. I will be bringing this list to each session we have together to reference and to ensure that each of our agreements are being honored throughout the program."

Have youth individually sign the Group Agreements to show their commitment.



Intro YSP Curriculum

2 minutes

Say, "Before we get started, I would like to give you a little background on what we're doing here today. The Youth Spirit Program started four years ago. Our goal is to help you live your best life possible. We believe that you are the change that our ancestors called for. No pressure. To do that, we need the support from our relatives, culture, and community, plus we need to learn some skills!

There are 13 lessons, plus an honoring ceremony at the end. We will meet at [location] over the next [#] weeks for [time] hours."

Say, "The Youth Spirit Program, which we sometimes call "YSP" for short, will be focus on skills that can help you lead your best life that weaves in our Swinomish culture and Totem Pole Stories."

Say, "You each have a handbook that we will use over the course of this program. You can either take them home with you and bring them back each day or I can keep them for you."

Distribute handbook and review organization. Reference the doodle and journal pages for each chapter.

Say, "Each chapter will have handouts on the topic we are focusing on, information on drugs and alcohol, and has a 'doodle' and 'journal' page. The doodle page is for you to use at during our 'listening' times. Research has told us that when your wrist is moving, like in doodling or taking notes, we are better learners. We will not use our doodle page when we have guest speakers or elders talking with us. We will talk more about respectful listening as we go. The journal pages will be used at the end of each lesson to reflect on what we have learned. Any questions before we begin?"

Chapter 1
Youth Handout
#1

Doodle Page

Feel free to draw while you listen.
It can help you learn better!



Totem Poles Protocol

5 minutes

Brainstorm

Say, "Now, I would kindly like to ask our guest speakers to talk about the importance of Totem Pole stories and what it means to our Swinomish way of life and how it can be used as a teaching tool for life. We will weave the Totem Pole stories throughout the Youth Spirit Program. Who can tell me what they already know about Totem Pole stories and why they think it's important to talk about?"

Record their answers on flipchart or whiteboard.

Say, "The reason we are talking about the Swinomish Totem Pole stories is first to honor the ancestors and secondly, to learn and continue traditional customs to promote self-discovery. They require using all the aspects of ourselves: our minds, emotions, spiritual beliefs and physical bodies to complete the journey. What do you think is needed in order to create a successful Totem pole?"

Generate a list from participants and write it on the board.

More time will be needed

Activity option: have youth write on sticky notes and place them on poster with title: "Successful Totem Poles".

The list should include some of the following:

Spiritual preparation (prayer, "ceremonial state of mind") * putting your heart and soul into it * Carvers who are strong, fit and flexible * Good communication with others * Teamwork * Having clear goals and having a way to achieve those goals * Knowing where you are going and how to get there * Commitment and how to maintain it * Knowledge to handle problems or emergencies that arise * Drinking plenty of water and eating healthy foods, using sunscreen * Rest and be ready to go when called upon * Knowing and respecting totem protocols * Taking breaks, sharing the job equally * No drugs/alcohol or cigarettes * Being prepared * Supporting and respecting each other * Following directions and listening- not arguing * Making wise decisions * Have a vested interest in sharing songs, dances and culture



Totem Poles Stories

5 minutes

Life's Journey

Say, "We are comparing the Totem Pole stories to life's journey for several reasons: They take courage and stamina to create. They can also serve as a metaphor for life. It can provide Swinomish Youth the skills needed to navigate through life without being pulled off course by alcohol or other drugs, with tribal culture, traditions, and values as compass and anchor. By learning about strengths our Swinomish People have, we can combat the pressures of substance use and abuse among our youth."

Ask, "What does not having a good plan for life's journey lead to?"

Generate responses from participants and write them on the board/ flip chart.

Say, "It can lead to depression, drug and alcohol abuse, anxiety, poor physical health, being stressed out."

Obstacles On Journey

Say, "In our journey through life there are many obstacles that can hinder us from progressing on our journey. What do think some obstacles might be that can keep us from living our best lives?"

The list may include:

- getting tired/exhaustion/ discourages
- not knowing what to do
- people letting you down
- Negative attitude
- Poor communication

Cultural Component Option(s)

If time allows, have guest speaker share on:

Traditional Swinomish protocols – both our own and a hosting community's protocols. For example, when you are a guest in another community, there are certain ways you introduce yourself and your family.

Sometimes there can be gender differences (women do one thing, men do another).

Discuss collaboration as a team or family; help or reach out for help when needed.

Say, "Traditional Swinomish protocols will be woven throughout the curriculum. Protocol is similar to "etiquette." Intro Totem Pole Stories

**If you choose this option, this will add additional time allotted in the outline.*





Use of Drugs, Tobacco & Alcohol 5 minutes

Minilecture & Whole Group Discussion

Say, "One obstacle that is a problem for many young people today is the use of alcohol, drugs and non-ceremonial tobacco (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, chew, etc.). We will be addressing issues related to drug, alcohol and tobacco use throughout these chapters. As we mentioned earlier, we have thirteen chapters.

Besides the topic of each chapter, we will also discuss:

- Swinomish beliefs that are associated with living a balanced, meaningful, and happy life
- Various drugs and the risks associated with using them

Tobacco And Smokeless Tobacco Use

Say, "Some Tribes, mostly East and Central U.S., used tobacco for traditional ceremonial purposes only and never abused it. Tobacco should only be used in this way, because if it is abused it can be addictive, harmful, and can prevent you from being in balance. Later on we will talk more about tobacco."

Alcohol Use

Distribute handout – Physical Effects of Alcohol and briefly discuss.

Say, "I know that in school you receive a lot of information about alcohol and drugs. The handouts that we have for these chapters provide some of the same information but hopefully may add more to what you already know. Before we look at the handout, let's see how much you already know about the physical effects of prolonged use of alcohol. If you use alcohol for an extended period of time, what are some of the ways that it will affect your body?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Before we look at the next handout, let's see how much you already know about alcohol dependence and the dangers of drinking too much. What is alcohol dependence?"
Allow for responses.

Chapter 1 Youth Handout #2

Physical Effects of Alcohol

Prolonged use of alcohol leads to permanent damage to brain cells. The effects of the damage include loss of sensation, paralysis of eye movements and mental deterioration.

Alcohol consumption increases the risk of developing certain forms of cancer, especially cancer of the esophagus, mouth, throat, voice box, colon and rectum.

As little as 3 drinks a day may increase risk of cirrhosis of the liver (scarring of the liver). Alcoholic cirrhosis can cause death.

Chronic consumption can lead to alcoholic hepatitis, or inflammation of the liver.

Its symptoms include fever, jaundice (abnormal yellowing of the skin, eyeballs, and urine), and abdominal pain. Alcoholic hepatitis can cause death.

Central nervous system effects include blackouts, sleep problems and hangover.

Use of alcohol can impair sexual functioning.

High doses cause damage to body organs such as the brain, heart, stomach, and intestines.

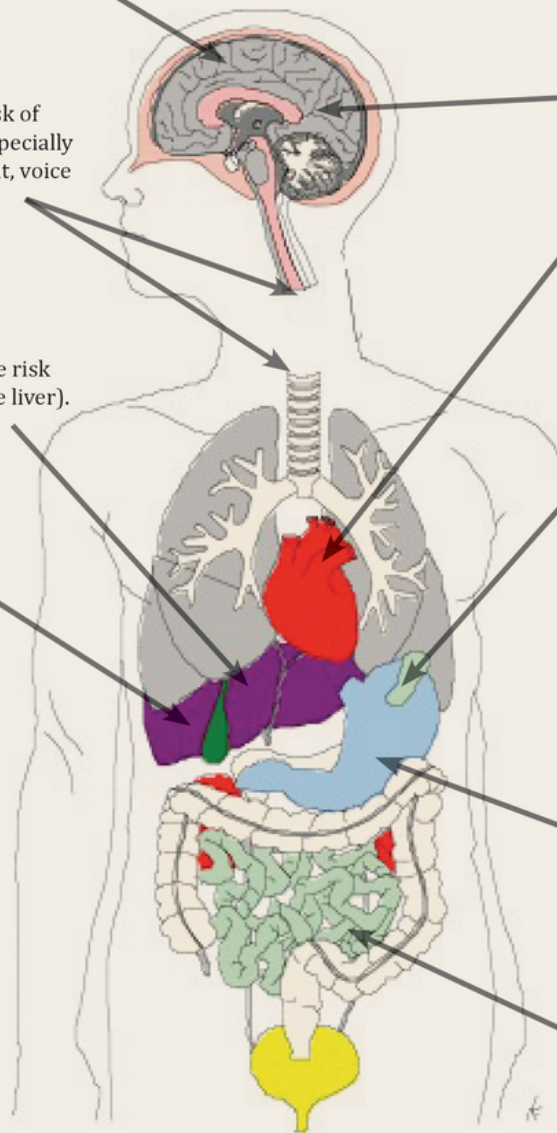
Higher doses lead to cognitive, perceptual, and behavioral impairments.

Chronic use increases risk of high blood pressure, strokes, and heart attacks. It also inhibits production of red & white blood cells, which may result in anemia and weakened resistance to infection.

Long-term use of alcohol can cause an inflammation of the pancreas. The pancreas helps to regulate the body's blood sugar levels by producing insulin and helps in digesting the food we eat. This condition is associated with severe abdominal pain and weight loss and can be fatal.

Chronic use increases the risk of peptic ulcers, gastric secretion, blood vessels dilate, diarrhea and impaired ability to absorb nutrients.

Most body systems are affected by alcohol. 70% to 80% of alcohol is absorbed in the small intestine.





Use of Drugs, Tobacco & Alcohol continued

Alcohol Use continued...

Say, "Alcohol dependence has four symptoms:

- 1) Craving (a strong need or urge to drink)
- 2) Loss of control (where the drinker can't stop drinking)
- 3) Physical dependence (leads to withdrawal symptoms)
- 4) Tolerance (the need to drink greater amounts of alcohol to get "high")

What are the danger signs of overdose?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Symptoms of alcohol poisoning include vomiting, unconsciousness, cold, clammy or bluish skin; slow or irregular breathing. How do I know if a friend has consumed too much alcohol?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "How do I know if a friend has a problem with drinking?"

Allow for responses.

Distribute Alcohol Use/ Abuse handout and briefly discuss

Say, "Would you want alcohol to be a part of your life's journey?"

Allow participants to think about this question, and then ask for a few responses to the question, and the reasons behind their response.

Alcohol Use / Abuse

What is Alcohol Dependence?

Alcohol dependence has four symptoms:

1. Craving a strong need, or urge to drink
2. Loss of control, where the drinker can't stop drinking
3. Physical dependence leads to withdrawal symptoms; nausea, sweating, shakiness, anxiety
4. Tolerance is the need to drink greater amounts of alcohol to get "high"

What are the Danger Signs of Overdose?

"Alcohol poisoning" is a potentially fatal physical reaction to an alcohol overdose or binge drinking. Symptoms of alcohol poisoning include:

- vomiting
- unconsciousness
- cold, clammy, pale, or bluish skin
- slow or irregular breathing (less than 8 breaths a minute or 10 or more seconds between breaths)

When excessive amounts of alcohol are consumed, the brain is deprived of oxygen. After struggling to deal with the overdose, the brain will eventually

Cultural Component Option(s)

If time allows, youth will create painted totem pole on plywood and present their totem to the group and explain the importance to them.

**If you choose this option, this will add additional time allotted in outline.*



Closing and Final Reflections

5 minutes

Say, "What is something new you learned today? What is something you can share with friends, family and your community from today's lesson?"

Distribute the handouts – What did I Learn Today? Encourage the youth to write what they have learned.

If necessary, give youth a few examples of what they may have learned from this chapter.

The list may include some of the following responses:

- It is important to choose who is in your life
- Sometimes you don't get to choose who's in your life. You either learn to live with that person or go to your elder with your concerns
- It is important to make good decisions about alcohol and drugs
- It is important to be prepared life's journey
- How to understand the different parts of who you are – physical, emotional, mental, spiritual

Pass out a list of Native Youth Support Resources from We R Native.

Mention the next meeting time, location and the topic that will be covered, if applicable.

If time allows, close with a poem, song, story or tradition that highlights the activity concept.



Chapter 1
Youth Handout
#4

Journal Space

What have I learned Today?

Think about your mental, spiritual, social, and physical self.
Then draw, doodle, or write about what you have strengthen
today.

Youth Support



For free 24/7 crisis support

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Crisis Text Line
Text: NATIVE to 741 741
www.crisistextline.org/



Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
Dial or Text: 988
www.988lifeline.org/chat/

Abuse & Sexual Assault



StrongHearts Native Helpline
Call, text, or chat 24/7
1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)
www.strongheartshelpline.org



National Sexual Assault Hotline Call
(24/7): 1-800-656-HOPE
www.rainn.org/



National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline
Call (24/7): 1-866-331-9474
Text: LOVEIS to 22522
www.loveisrespect.org



Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline
(24/7): 1-800-4-A-Child (422-4453)

Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco



National Institute on Drug Abuse for
Teens
Call: 1-800-662-HELP
www.nida.nih.gov/research-topics/parents-educators



Truth: Smoking, Vaping, and Opioids
Text: DITCHVAPE to 88709
www.thetruth.com/article/this-is-quitting



Get the Facts About Drugs:
Just Think Twice
Call: 1-855-378-4373
Text: 55753
www.justthinktwice.gov/



National Drug Information Treatment
& Referral Hotline
Call: 1-800-662-4357
www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment

Mental Health



Mental Health America
Call: 1-800-969-6642
Text: MHA 741 741
www.mhanational.org/

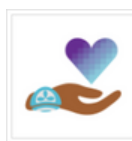


National Hotline. Reach Out
& Get Help
Call: 1-800-448-3000
Text: VOICE to 20121
www.boystown.org/hotline

YouthLine
A Service of Lines for Life

We listen. We support.
We keep it to ourselves.

Teens Helping Teens
Call: 1-800-852-8336
Text: YLNATIVE to 839 863
www.theyouthline.org



Caring Messages - to
remind you of how
awesome you are!
Text: CARING to 65664
Text: COLLEGE to 65664



We R Native: My Mind
Text: CARING to 65664
www.wernative.org/my-mind



Youth Support

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Relationships & Dating



StrongHearts Native Helpline
Call, text, or chat 24/7
1-844-7NATIVE (762-8483)
strongheartshelpline.org/



Love is Respect
Call (24/7): 1-866-331-9474
Text: LOVEIS to 22522
www.loveisrespect.org



That's Not Cool
Healthy Relationships, Online & Off
Call (24/7): 1-866-331-8453



We R Native: My Relationships
www.wernative.org/my-relationships

Sexual Health



Planned Parenthood
Call: 1-800-230-7526
Chat: www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/roo-sexual-health-chatbot



We R Native: Sexual Health
Text: SEX to 94449
www.wernative.org/ask-your-relatives



I Know Mine
www.iknowmine.org/ask-nurse-lisa



It's Your Sex Life
www.itsyoursexlife.com



Bedsider
www.bedsider.org/



Get Yourself Tested #GYT
www.cdc.gov/std/saw/gyt/howtoGYT.htm



Sexual Identity - 2SLGBTQ+



Paths (Re)Membered Project
Text: 2SLGBTQ to 94449
www.pathsremembered.org/



Native Youth Sexual Health Network
www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com/



The Trevor Project
Call (24/7): 1-866-488-7386
Text: START to 678 678
www.thetrevorproject.org/



It Gets Better Project
www.itgetsbetter.org/



Trans Lifeline
Call: 1-877-565-8860
www.translifeline.org/



Human Trafficking Hotline
Call (24/7): 1-888-373-7888
Text HELP to 233 733
www.humantraffickinghotline.org



Youth Support



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Bullying

stopbullying

Stopbullying.gov
www.stopbullying.gov/resources/teens



Cyberbullying
www.cyberbullying.org/resources/students



We R Native: Bullying Prevention
www.wernative.org/my-life/life-hacks/bullying-prevention

Find Help Near You



SAMSHA - Find the treatment center closest to you
www.samhsa.gov/find-treatment

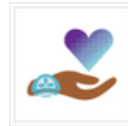


Mental Health America - Find the clinic closest to you
www.mhanational.org/find-affiliate

Text Message Campaigns



Text: NATIVE to 94449
For health & wellness tips



Caring Messages - to remind you of how awesome you are!
Text: CARING to 65664 (ages 13-24)
Text: COLLEGE to 65664 (college youth)



Text: SEX to 94449
Get tips and resources to protect your sexual health



Text: 2SLGBTQ to 94449 or ALLY to 94449
Native. Two-Spirit. LGBTQ. #BornSacred



Text: STEM to 94449
For inspiration and motivation on your journey in Health, Technology, Engineering or Math



Text: FITNESS to 94449
For inspiration and motivation to conquer your personal wellness goals and you could win fitness gear or a fitbit!!!

TIP: SIGN UP FOR ONE CAMPAIGN AT A TIME. OTHERWISE YOUR MESSAGES WILL GET ALL MIXED UP AND THAT'S NO BUENO

We ALL need Help...

... at different points in time. Every single one of us! Trust your gut and...

Share - any concerns you have

Talk - with someone you can trust

Report - if you're worried about someone

