

YOUTH SPIRIT PROGRAM



Chapter 5: Moods & Coping with Emotions

Inclusion Note:

*Native Youth Resources from
THRIVE at the Northwest
Portland Area Indian Health
Board*





The goals of this chapter

...to learn about different emotions and positive and negative self-talk. They also learn about depression and suicide, how to cope with negative emotions and difficult situations, and how to find a safe person or place to express emotions. Information about inhalants is also included.

Age Groups: Middle and High School Youth

Time: 35 minutes

Youth will:

- learn about human emotions
- learn about the relationship between thoughts, feelings and actions
- learn about the signs of depression and suicide
- learn about ways to cope with negative emotions
- learn about ways to seek help for you or someone you care about

Materials

- Whiteboard/flipchart + marker(s)
- Youth Handouts
- Question Box/ paper

*Additional Activity Option(s) - additional time needed for this activity

- My Self-care plan Activity
- M&M's (Note: You can choose to use any type of food to do the mindfulness exercise. You can also choose to do any other activity that involves using one of the five senses.

Preparation

- Preview Lesson plan
- Consider inviting tribal and school mental health team to introduce themselves and talk about available resources
- 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

- A print-out of the booklet, "The Swinomish Totem Pole: Tribal Legends"

Preparation:

- Consider inviting an elder to share about how they got through a tough time
- Interviews – pair youth or have them self-select someone to interview
 - Brainstorm interview questions



Welcome & Group Check in

5 minutes

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

Say, "Before we continue, do you have any questions or comments about the last chapter?"

Question Box Q&A

Respond to questions left in the question box

Icebreaker

Time Varies

Use the "[Icebreaker](https://www.healthynativeyouth.org/stand-alone-lessons/)" activity guide found on Healthy Native Youth (<https://www.healthynativeyouth.org/stand-alone-lessons/>) to find an icebreaker appropriate for your group (i.e. small or large group, new or established group, etc.)



Doodle Page

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



Emotions

5 minutes

Say, "Today, we're going to talk about our moods and how we can understand them better and use them to grow into the people we want to be. All humans are emotional beings. We all have a number of emotions we deal with on a regular basis. Let's try to name as many as we can."

Ask the participants for a list of emotions and write it on the board. Youth typically think this is an easy task but soon find that it is harder than they think.

Say, "Great job everyone! There are many ways that people act and feel with different emotions."

Generate a list for each of the following questions:

- How do you behave when you are happy?"
- Where do you feel it in your body?
- How do you behave when you are angry?
- Where do you feel it in your body?
- How do you behave when you are sad?
- Where do you feel it in your body?

Say, "The point is that we behave in different ways depending on the emotion. We also feel differently depending on the emotion we are feeling AND we actually have distinct bodily reactions (or physiological reactions) depending on the emotion we are feeling. All emotions are OK, but some behaviors as a result of emotions are not."

Say, "Emotions come and go but what do you think causes that to happen?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Emotions are reactions to events that happen in the outside environment (e.g., a death in the family, a relationship break up, the birth of a child, a slap in the face). OR...emotions can be reactions to events that occur inside of us. In other words, a person's own thoughts, behaviors, and physical reactions can cause emotional responses to occur."



Anger

5 minutes

Say, "Anger is an important emotion to think about because it alerts you that something might be wrong and has the potential to create a lot of problems. If you were a person who loses your temper often and acts out aggressively when you are angry, how do you think that would work out for you?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Is there anything wrong with feeling anger?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "No, anger is a normal, natural emotional response to being hurt, frustrated or feeling disrespected. There is nothing wrong with feeling anger, but it becomes problematic if we deal with it in unhealthy ways."

Say, "There are two unhealthy ways that many people deal with anger.

They stuff or repress their anger (What does that mean? How does that feel?)

They act out by becoming violent

Why do you think stuffing or repressing our anger would be unhealthy?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "It is not healthy to hold anger in or pretend that we are not feeling angry. Stuffing our anger is a problem because it means that we are denying our feelings. In some individuals, it can lead to depression. Some individuals keep thinking about what makes them angry and it builds up until they explode. Why is violence not a healthy way to deal with our anger?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Anger is an emotion and violence is an inappropriate way to deal with anger. When we act out our anger aggressively, there is a risk of harm to self and others."

Say, "We need to learn to direct our anger in appropriate ways. The first way to learn to deal with anger is to recognize when you are feeling it. How do you feel when you are angry? Where do you feel it in your body?"



Anger

Continued...

Allow for responses. Possible answers:

- Tension in neck, chest, arms, legs, face and stomach
- Heart starts pounding
- Breath faster
- Blood rushes to your face

Say, "Let's say that you are in a situation where you find that you are angry. There are many effective ways to deal with your anger and the following are just a few of those ways:

- Count to 10. Many people dismiss this simple way to deal with anger but it actually works because it distracts you from your anger. It is difficult for any of us to concentrate on two things at once. When you are thinking about something as simple as counting, you stop thinking about what is making you angry.
- Reason with yourself. The way you do this is to talk yourself out of being upset. So you ask yourself questions to determine if your anger is worth an aggressive action.
- You might ask:
 - Is the matter worthy of my continued attention?
 - Am I justified in feeling the way I do?
 - Do I have an effective response?
- Time-out. Leave the situation until you can calm down.
- Learn to direct your anger appropriately to the appropriate person by using assertiveness skills.
- Assertive behavior can help stop aggressive behavior.
- You state how you feel and then express what you need.
 - I feel angry that...
 - I would like...
- If you can't talk to the person who you are angry with, talk to a friend or therapist about your anger.

Say, "Can you think of other ways to deal with out-of-control anger?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Knowing what we are feeling and thinking and having strategies for dealing with our out-of control behavior can be very helpful in coping with anger and other feelings.



Making Mistakes & Depression

5 minutes

Say, "When we make a mistake, we can think many different thoughts about ourselves, both positive and negative. Like,

"Oh, I'm so stupid, I never do anything right."

"Well, that was a mistake but everybody makes mistakes so that's ok, at least now I will know what I should do next time."

Say, "The point is that thoughts, feelings, and actions are related and we can make the decision to change our thoughts so that we can think more positively and feel better in our lives."

Say, "Now I would like to talk about a problem that affects a lot of young people: depression. What kinds of events bring out sadness or a depressed mood in us?"

Allow for responses. Responses might include:

- Death
- A sad movie
- Someone else's sadness
- Addictions
- A relationship breakup
- Friend problems
- Moving away
- School
- Trying to get a job
- Being broke/in debt
- Physical illness
- Self esteem
- Helplessness

Say, "How do you know if someone is depressed? What is their behavior like?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Let's look at some of the typical symptoms of depression."

Distribute handout - Symptoms of Depression and read its content.

Say, "You're probably thinking, "Hey I have some of those symptoms, I must be depressed." All of us get some of these symptoms sometimes, but that doesn't necessarily mean that we are depressed."

Symptoms of Depression

An adolescent is considered depressed if five or more of the following symptoms are present during the same two-week period and at least one of the symptoms is either (1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure

Symptoms

- Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day, as indicated by feelings of sadness or emptiness, tearfulness
- Irritable mood or agitation
- Acting-out behavior (missing curfews, unusual defiance)
- Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in most activities
- Change in appetite, either loss or an increase in appetite
- Significant weight loss (when not dieting) or weight gain
- Insomnia or hypersomnia (sleeping more than is normal)
- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Extreme restlessness or slowness of movement
- Low energy level, chronic fatigue
- Feelings of worthlessness or self-hatred
- Excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Frequent difficulties in concentration or decision-making
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide
- Plans to commit suicide



Making Mistakes & Depression

Continued...

Say, "To be diagnosed as having clinical depression, you must experience at least five of these symptoms for more than two weeks. And if you find that you have five of these symptoms for more than 2 weeks, you should seek help (e.g., talk to a doctor, mental health professional, parents, a teacher or a mentor). All of these symptoms are uncomfortable, but which of them can be life threatening?"

Allow for responses. Responses should include:

- Thoughts of death and suicide

Say, "Sometimes when people feel sad, they may think that life is hopeless or not worth living."



Suicide Danger Signs Mistakes & Depression

2 minutes

Say, "How would you know if a friend wanted to kill him or herself?"

Allow for responses.

Distribute handout - Suicide Danger Signs and read the danger signs, along with Native Youth Resources (Crisis Text line & 988 - Suicide & Crisis Lifeline).

Say, "If you see a friend displaying any of these behaviors, what should you do?"

Have the youth generate a list of things to do. List may include:

- Tell a teacher or counselor
- Tell a medical professional
- Tell a parent, or mentor
- Call a crisis line (list them on a board or in a handout)
- Go with them to get help

Say, "It's good to remember that suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, and there are a lot of things that can be done to solve the problems that are making the person feel hopeless."

Suicide Danger Signs

The following are danger signs to look for if you suspect a friend is suicidal.

Danger Signs

- Direct suicide threats and comments (“I wish I was dead”; “you’d be better off without me”)
- A previous suicide attempt, no matter how minor
- Preoccupation with death in music, art, and writing
- Loss of a family member, pet, or boy- or girlfriend (through death, abandonment, or breakup)
- Family disruptions (parental unemployment, serious illness, relocation, divorce)
- Problems with sleeping, eating and personal hygiene
- Problems with schoolwork; loss of interest in activities that had been important
- Dramatic changes in behavior patterns (such as a shy adolescent suddenly becoming extremely outgoing)
- Prevailing sense of gloom, hopelessness, and helplessness
- Withdrawal from family members and friends; alienation of important people
- Giving away prized possessions (electronic devices, sports equipment, pets, other significant or meaningful items)
- A series of “accidents,” increase in risk-taking, or loss of interest in personal safety
- Says that he/she wants to die
- Self injury (cutting, other forms of self-harm)
- Substance abuse (using alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs, prescription medication)

If you see a friend showing any of these behaviors, seek help immediately.

Remember, suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem, and there are many things that can be done to solve the problems that are making the person feel hopeless.

If you or a friend are in crisis, we've got your back!



Scan the QR code using your phone for Native Youth Support Resources



FOR NATIVE YOUTH

Reach out for Help When you Need to

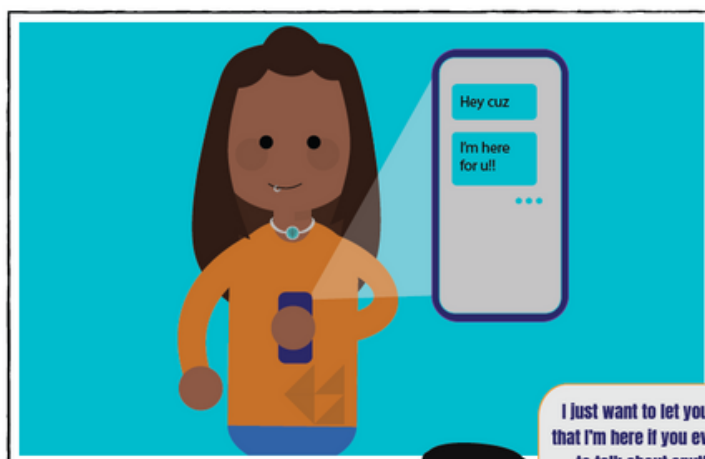
We all need a little support from time to time. No worries! You're not alone. If you or a friend are in crisis...

Text "Native" to 741741 , or Dial/ Text 988 for free 24/7 counseling support

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

988
SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

You can help those you care about by letting them know you're around if they need to talk. Need support? Talk to a trusted adult for help.



I just want to let you know that I'm here if you ever want to talk about anything, big or small.

#WeRNative

#CaringMessages

#CrisisTextLine



These materials were developed, in part, under grant number 5M082106 from SAMHSA. The views, opinions and content of this publication are those of the authors and contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of CMHS, SAMHSA, or HHS, and should not be construed as such.



Self-Medicating Behavior

3 minutes

Say, "We have spent a good deal of time talking about negative emotions and how to identify them. Now let's talk about things that we can do to cope with negative feelings and emotions. Some people might choose self-medicating behavior. Who can tell me what they think self-medicating means?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "This means using drugs or alcohol as a way to cope with the negative emotions we are feeling. For example we might...."

- Drink alcohol to deal with the pain of a parent's divorce
- Smoke weed to try and relieve loneliness
- Get high to feel good and forget

Is this an effective way to deal with our feelings? Can anyone think of why this might not be a good solution to our problems?"

Allow for responses and create a list. The list might include:

- Not a real solution, 'problems' still exist
- Stunts emotional maturation
- Don't learn healthy/productive coping behaviors
- Could become dependent on alcohol/drugs
- Drugs/alcohol can make things like depression worse

Say, "Trying to avoid feelings by using alcohol or other drugs is tempting, but ultimately accepting and feeling the sadness (or any other negative emotion) is the only way to get through the experience."

Say, "We have talked about coping behaviors that might have consequences we don't want. Now let's talk about what we can do to change our actions in other ways to help cope with situations where we feel sad, angry or anxious."

Say, "Besides changing our thinking, we can also change our actions as a way to cope with situations where we feel sad, angry or anxious. Sometimes, there is something wrong with the situation. We can think about what we can do to change the situation."



Self-Medicating Behavior

Continued...

Say, "Our mind or thoughts affect our brain, which trigger a physical response. When we have negative thoughts or feelings, studies have shown that these emotions will only last seven minutes. If we can find a way to distract or change the scene or situation, or by taking a time out, this will help ease these emotions. Can you think of other effective ways of changing the scene or taking a time out?"

Allow for responses.



Life's Balancing Act

1 minute

Say, "Many people believe that in order to be well we must maintain balance in our lives: spiritual, emotional, physical and mental."

Say, "We can actually start feeling depressed or sad when our life gets out of balance. This happens if we have nothing to do or when we are too busy. Sometimes we can start feeling sad or depressed just because we aren't doing many fun activities or getting together with friends to do positive things."

Exercise

5 minutes

Say, "Exercise is one great way to change your mood and feel better again. When you exercise, you not only have something to do, but you also help your body stay healthy. Exercise also releases chemicals in the brain called endorphins, which are natural mood enhancers; that is, they make you feel happier. Exercise should be fun!

Have the youth generate a list of fun ways to exercise and write them on the board.

Say, "Things to keep in mind about exercise:

- It's best to have more than one type of exercise, so that if something gets in the way of your regular exercise (like it's raining too hard to hike) you can do something else easily.
- When you first start exercising it's sometimes not as fun as it will be later. Give it a little time, start slow, and don't expect to be perfect.
- Adding exercise to your lifestyle can be one of the best things you ever do because you will be strengthening your body as well as helping your mood.
- And later on you can use exercise to cope even in situations where you really can't fix the problem."



Relaxation

2 minutes

Say, "OK everybody – let's see what it feels like when our body and muscles are tense."

Have participants tense up their muscles (hunch shoulders, clench fists, etc.).

Say, "When have you noticed that you feel this way?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "When people get upset, so do their bodies. When a person gets upset or angry, changes in his body lead to an increase in heart rate, tense muscles, sweating, etc. Learning to relax can help you be aware of the tension in your body and help you control and calm down your breathing, heart rate and muscle tension. Relaxation exercises can also help you deal with negative thinking and feelings."

Say, "Deep breathing is just one relaxation technique. You can use deep breathing for practice or for daily stress relief by doing it for about 10-15 minutes. I'll show you two relaxation exercises that you can do anytime: deep breathing or mindfulness."

Deep Breathing

1 minute

Say, "Doing deep breathing is a great way to relieve stress. Place yourself in a comfortable position. Arms and legs should be uncrossed or your feet touching the floor, if you're in a chair. Hands should rest on the stomach or thighs."

Say, "Breathe in through your nose for a count of four, filling your stomach with air. Place your hands on your stomach region and notice your stomach expand. This means that you are breathing much deeper breaths. Exhale the air slowly through your mouth for a count of six. You can do this 3-10 times when you are trying to calm down."

Mindfulness

1 minute

Say, "There is another strategy that can be used to cope with negative feelings and thoughts; it is called Mindfulness. Mindfulness is a strategy used to experience and observe exactly what is happening in the moment. The idea is to focus the mind and awareness on the current moment's activity and nothing else. If you find yourself caught up in a story you are telling yourself, imagine shooing it away like a fly and bring your attention back to what you're doing. Achieving such a focus requires constant control of attention."

Say, "It is helpful because many times our minds are preoccupied with worries, so much so that we become tense and anxious. Mindfulness allows you to take a break from those worries."

*Additional Activity Option:

M&M Game

**If you choose this option, add an additional 10 minutes to the session.*

Say, "We are going to do an exercise that will help us practice mindfulness. I am going to give you one M&M (with peanuts) to eat."

*Note – peanut allergies: If any of the participants can't eat peanuts, have something else available to do the mindfulness exercise.

Say, "I would like you to eat the candy differently than you may be accustomed to eating it. I want you to place it in your mouth and be mindful or aware of the experience of eating one M&M. When you place it in your mouth, be aware of the movement of placing the candy in your mouth and observe how it feels in your mouth, what it tastes like, and maybe even your emotional response to it. I would like you to eat it very slowly, being aware of everything that is happening as you are eating it. You may even peel the crunchy layer off of the top and be aware of how the crunchiness feels in your mouth. Observe and be aware of the smoothness of the chocolate inside the shell. Observe and be aware of how it tastes and feels in your mouth. Then, after you have eaten the chocolate, experience the sensations involved in eating the peanut inside. And as you are doing all of this, breathe gently and deeply."

Say, "Close your eyes and place the candy in your mouth. So what is it like to eat an M&M mindfully?"

Encourage multiple responses.

Say, "When you were eating the M&M, how much time were you able to spend thinking about other things?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "So can you see how using mindfulness can give you a little rest from your anxieties and worries?"

*Note: You can choose to use any type of food to do the mindfulness exercise. You can also choose to do any other activity that involves using one of the five senses.



Inhalants

5 minutes

Say, "The next drug that we will be addressing is inhalants. Before we look at the handout, what do you think inhalants are?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Inhalant use refers to the intentional breathing of gas or vapors with the purpose of getting high. Inhalants are legal, everyday products that have a useful purpose, but can be misused. Some common products inhaled include: spray paint, liquid correction fluid, hair spray, paint thinners, felt-tip markers, glues and adhesives, fabric protectors, acetone products, carburetor cleaner, gasoline, and propane gas. There are literally thousands of products that can be inhaled. What are the risks of using inhalants?"

Allow for responses. List should include:

- Inhalants can damage the brain, heart, liver, kidneys, blood, bone marrow and other organs
- Inhalant use may cause violent behavior, unconsciousness, and even death
- Inhalants can product heart failure
- Inhalants kill brain cells. Result: permanent personality changes, memory impairment, learning disabilities, loss of coordination, slurred speech, tremors and uncontrollable shaking
- One in ten users will not survive the first time experience
- Repeated use of spray paint as an inhalant can cause lung damage
- Inhalants can cause damage to nerves in the back and legs causing polyneuropathy (lack of feeling)

Say, "Do you think inhalants are addictive?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Yes, inhalants are physically and psychologically addictive, and users suffer withdrawal symptoms."

Distribute handout - Inhalants. Briefly discuss contents.

Inhalants

What is Inhalant Use?

Inhalant use refers to the intentional breathing of gas or vapors with the purpose of getting high. Inhalants are legal, everyday products that have a useful purpose, but can be misused. Some common products inhaled include: spray paint, liquid correction fluid, hair spray, paint thinners, felt-tip markers, glues and adhesives, fabric protectors, acetone products, carburetor cleaner, gasoline, and propane gas. There are literally thousands of products that can be inhaled.

Slang Terms For Inhalants: Glue, Kick, Bang, Sniff, Huff, Poppers, Whippets

Effects of Using Inhalants

Symptoms of inhalant abuse include:

- red, runny nose, nose bleeding
- headaches, dilated pupils
- difficulty concentrating
- slowed body functions
- nausea and vomiting
- sudden memory loss
- chronic cough
- lack of coordination
- sores on mouth & nose
- high lasts from 15-45 minutes
- spaced-out behavior
- loss of consciousness

Long Term Adverse Effects

- Inhalants can damage the brain, heart, liver, kidneys, blood, bone marrow and other organs
- Inhalant use may cause violent behavior, unconsciousness, and even death
- Inhalants can product heart failure
- Inhalants kill brain cells. Result: permanent personality changes, memory impairment, learning disabilities, loss of coordination, slurred speech, tremors and uncontrollable shaking
- One in ten users will not survive the first time experience
- Inhalants are physically and psychologically addictive and users suffer withdrawal symptoms
- Repeated use of spray paint as an inhalant can cause lung damage
- Inhalants can cause damage to nerves in the back and legs causing polyneuropathy (lack of feeling)

What Can I Do if Someone I Know is Huffing and is in Crisis?

If a person is at risk of dying from inhalant use, the best thing to do is remain calm and seek help. To help prevent death by asphyxia (suffocation), remove anything that is blocking the ability to breathe (e.g., plastic bags). In the case of a person passing out from inhalant use, move him/ her into a position where he or she can easily breathe. Sometimes individuals will inhale their own vomit, which is usually fatal. Agitation may cause the huffer to become violent, experience hallucinations or suffer heart dysfunction. Make sure the room is well ventilated and call EMS. If the person is not breathing, administer CPR.

Sudden Sniffing Death (SSD)

SSD happens when the inhalant replaces all the oxygen in the lungs and the nervous system. Basically the person suffocates!

Inhalants can also lead to death by disrupting the normal heart rhythm, which can lead to heart attacks.

Sudden Sniffing Death (SSD). This means the user can die the 1st, 10th or 100th time he or she uses inhalants.

Cultural Component Option(s)

If time allows, consider:

- Sharing Totem Pole Stories: *Mountain Goat*
- Inviting an Elder or community member in to share a story about how they got through a tough time in their life (Example: outpouring of love and concern at funerals)
- Having youth interview an elder or mentor

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



Closing and Final Reflections

5 minutes

Distribute the handout - What have I learned today? Encourage youth to write what they have learned. If necessary, draw on the board and give the youth a few examples of what they may have learned from this chapter.

Say, "We learned about the relationship between thoughts, feelings and actions. We learned how to know when someone is suicidal. We learned how to cope with negative thoughts. We learned how we can be in control of ourselves, addressing our Mental health."

Say, "We learned about depression and its symptoms. We examined how to help someone who is suicidal. We learned that if we remain spiritual, it will help us control our thoughts and feelings, addressing our Spiritual health."

Say, "We examined how depression can affect us physically. We learned that there are things we can do to change our moods, such as exercise, relaxation and meditation, changing the scene and accepting the emotions, addressing our Physical health."

Say, "We learned that we can control our thoughts, feelings, and actions. We learned that we can interpret situations in life in different ways. We learned that interpreting events in a more positive light can help us with a depressed mood, addressing our Emotional health."

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 5
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 strengthened
today.