

YOUTH SPIRIT PROGRAM



Chapter 11: Effective Communication: Expressing Thoughts & Feelings



The goal of this chapter

...is to learn about effective communications skills, how to disagree respectfully, refusal and assertiveness skills, and how to deal with peer reactions to assertiveness. Participants practice positive ways to resolve conflict and to express feelings. Information about opiates is also included.

Age Groups: Middle and High School Youth

Time: 40 minutes

Youth will:

- learn different methods people use to communicate
- learn how to make effective refusals
- learn how to disagree respectfully
- learn how to communicate directly and effectively
- learn how to deal with potential peer reactions to assertiveness
- learn about communication using social media
- learn about oral traditions

Materials

- Whiteboard/flipchart + marker(s)
- Youth Handouts
- Question Box/ paper
- Timer or phone for keeping track of activity times
- Pencils/ pens

Preparation

- Preview Lesson plan.
- Role Play: the facilitator or co-facilitator will demonstrate some non-verbal behaviors to the group.
Suggestions:
 - A person standing and thinking
 - A person looking bored
 - A person looking angry
 - A person putting their head on the table while a speaker/teacher is talking
- The facilitator and co-facilitator will role-play assertive refusal. Prepare by reading the script ahead of time
- 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.

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 a speaker who can talk about communication, mediation, or tell the *Legend of the Hail* Totem Pole story.



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?"

Say, "Today we are going to talk about communication. When you think about the word 'communication' what thoughts or images come up for you?"

Ask youth what they think communication means. Allow time for responses.

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!



What is Communication?

10 minutes

Say, "Communication is how people or animals exchange information. Communication requires that everyone understand a common language. There are ways to communicate that you hear, such as speaking, singing and tone of voice. There are also silent, non-verbal ways to communicate such as body language, sign language, touch, eye contact, or writing."

Say, "Who can tell me some ways that we communicate?" List may include:

- Talk – audio/sound
- Babies cry
- Visually – reading (books, magazines)
- Historically used story poles
- Carvings and paintings
- TV, movies, DVDs
- Self-communication
- Touch (patting, Braille)
- Facial expressions – smile, frown
- Body language: wave, point, stomp feet
- Facebook, instant messaging, email, texting

Say, "Can anyone think of some traditional tools that some Tribal people use to communicate?"

Allow time for responses.

Say, "Some traditional tools that some tribal people use for effective communication are a speaker's staff, the raising of a drum, use of an eagle fan to keep the drumbeat during protocol."

Say, "Basically, when we think about communication, two most common are (1) Non-verbal and (2) Verbal."



What is Communication?

Continued...

Non-Verbal (implicit communication)

Say, "I am going to demonstrate a few different non-verbal behaviors for you. When I do, I would like for you to shout out what you think it means. Any questions?"

Facilitator or co-facilitator can demonstrate non-verbal behaviors.

- Non-verbal action 1:
 - involve looking up, crossing arms and touching chin, looking puzzled, scratching head
 - *Shout out possibilities: A person standing and thinking*
- Non-verbal action 2:
 - yawning, looking at watch, drumming fingers on a desk, sighing, looking sleepy)
 - *Shout out possibilities: A person looking bored*
- Non-verbal action 3:
 - frown, pout, furrowed brow, gritting teeth, breathing hard, pounding fist on the table
 - *Shout out possibilities: A person looking angry*
- Non-verbal action 4:
 - A person putting their head on the table while a speaker/teacher is talking
 - *Shout out possibilities: not paying attention, sleepiness, ignoring, not being respectful*

Say, "Great job everyone!"



What is Communication?

Continued...

Verbal (explicit communication)

Say, "We learn a great deal about an individual by watching them – observing their non-verbal cues, but we also rely on verbal communication to express feelings, thoughts, and needs. These are some reasons we might use verbal communication:

- Explain our views
- Listen to others
- Give instructions"

Say, "There are two parts to verbal communication, (1) listening and (2) speaking."

Say, "The reason we verbally communicate is to exchange knowledge and wisdom, to share facts, knowledge and feelings. Why do you think this is important?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "One important reason to communicate is so that we know what a person is thinking and can get to know them better and not prejudge them – which is judging people before we know their story. Words are powerful. Why is it important not to prejudge people?"

Allow for responses. Refer to chapter 2 on stereotypes if necessary.



Expressions

5 minutes

Disrespectful Expression

Say, "When someone communicates disrespectfully, what are some ways it looks and sounds like?"

Allow time for responses and write ideas on the board. The list might include:

- They TELL you
- Talk loud or yell
- Don't listen
- Interrupt
- Get in somebody's space
- Poke a finger in your face/space
- Sometimes get physical

Say, "Do you think this an effective or respectful way to communicate? Are there other ways to communicate what you want?"

Allow time for responses and write ideas on the board. The list might include:

- Use a quiet voice
- Softer voices may get more attention
- Don't confront directly
- Elders might talk louder, or need to be spoken to clearly and loudly
- Use humor – many people listen better if there is some humor in what the speaker is saying

Say, "Words have meaning – words are powerful. Think about what you want to say before you say it."



Expressions

Continued...

Ineffective Expression

Say, "When someone communicates ineffectively, what is that like?"

Allow for responses.

Effective and Respectful Expression

Say, "When someone communicates effectively, what does this look like?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Tribal Council meetings can be good places to find examples of effective communicators. Council members and staff come prepared, are calm, and include documents to back up what they are saying."

Say, "One thing to consider is that what is effective and respectful communication in one community or culture might not be as effective in another. Where you are and whom you are with might change your choice of communication style. Cultural differences are important. How might you communicate when with your Elders, Aunties or Uncles? How might that be different from how you communicate with your friends?"

Allow time for responses.

Say, "How about in school?"

Allow for responses.

Distribute handout - Three Ways to Express Feelings and discuss contents.

Three Ways to Express Feelings

Aggressively

- Loud voice, sometimes yelling
- Uses abusive, disrespectful language
- Dominates the conversation
- Does not let the other person talk, or interrupts
- Is confrontational and tries to be intimidating
- Can become physically threatening or abusive.

Ineffectively

- Bottles up feelings, does not express feelings at all
- Avoids conflict to the point of not being able to move forward or damaging relationships
- Is wishy-washy and takes no firm stand
- Routinely does not get his/her needs met

Effectively

- A calm voice
- No eye contact with elders (when appropriate)
- Speaks in a firm, respectful tone.
- Makes "I" statements.
- Stands up for him/herself
- Makes direct statements
- Makes good eye contact (when appropriate)
- Listens to what the other person is saying
- Watches for non-verbal cues
- Does not try to force another person to change
- States why he/she feels the way he/she does
- States how they would like the situation to be changed
- Matches personal needs with community needs



Feelings

5 minutes

Say, "Can you think of other ways people from various cultures and generations might communicate or express feelings?"

Allow for responses.

Discuss the different ways individuals within a community might express themselves (example: people who stay silent when asked a question in order to reflect, or sometimes silence will mean "no" or "I don't know"). Differences between generations (Elders – slower paced / Youth – fast paced), differences that come from the evolution of technology.

Say, "Let's explore our different perceptions about ways that people communicate (how we perceive people when they are silent, cussing, emotional, etc.). The way you communicate is a form of presenting yourself to the world. Choosing words carefully is important."

Expressing Feelings Respectfully

Say, "Now let's look at how to express feelings respectfully. Can anyone tell me what "I" statements are?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Great job! When a person makes "I" statements, he/she is taking responsibility for his/her own feelings and not placing blame on the other person. Instead of saying, "You make me so angry," say, "I am upset."

Distribute handout - Expressing Feelings Respectfully and discuss contents.

Say, "How can making "I" statements help with effective and respectful communication?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Making "I" statements can also help with resolving conflicts. Communication can be very difficult when we are having a conflict with someone. The way you deliver the message can impact the outcome."

Expressing Feelings Respectfully

There are **three ways** to express feelings respectfully in every situation, start by saying:

"I think..."

"I feel..."

"I want..."

What does that look like?

Your best friend said that she would pick you up at 7:00 p.m. It is now 9:00 p.m. and she still has not picked you up.

- **I think...** "She said that she would pick me up at 7:00 and I am still waiting for her two hours later."
- **I feel...** "I feel angry and hurt because I feel that she is inconsiderate and obviously doesn't care about how I feel."
- "When I see her I am going to tell her that **I want** her to consider my feelings and at least call me if she is going to be late."



Feelings

Continued...

Expressing Feelings Respectfully

Say, "There are three components to expressing feelings respectfully:

- Your perspective of the situation, "I think..."
- Your feelings about the situation, "I feel..."
- Your wants regarding the situation, "I want..."

Say, "How might people of other cultures express their feelings?"

Allow for responses. List may include:

- Drumming at funerals
- Japanese people wear white at funerals
- Feeding the spirit
- Face to face invitations
- Bringing a gift or food

Say, "How can being able to express our feelings effectively and respectfully help us with our life's journey?"

Ask the youth to provide more examples where they might use their skills. Write down some ideas.

Expressing Positive Feelings

Say, "Expressing positive feelings and giving compliments are important skills in building healthy relationships. Complimenting people at school or work is an excellent way to show good social skills on the job."



Refusal Skills

5 minutes

Say, "Effective communication is very important in mediation. Mediators help people involved in a disagreement come to an agreement or a compromise. Mediators have to use effective communication skills: being respectful, listening, not interrupting, letting people talk."

Say, "The goal of any argument is to come to some sort of an agreement, which means that both people get a chance to state their feelings, reasons for doing things, and their side of the story."

Say, "Sometimes we think that one side wins and one side loses in a disagreement. Many times, if we use good communication, we can find ways to compromise so all sides feel good (or okay) about the outcome. Acceptance is also important if the outcome is not what you wanted or hoped for."

Say, "Being a good communicator can help problems be resolved. And communication is a lot about feelings - expressing feelings and trying to understand other people's feelings."

Say, "Let's look at a handout that suggests some steps to resolve conflict."

Distribute handout - Steps to Resolve Conflict, read it and discuss its contents.

Say, "By applying these tips, the result is that you feel better and hopefully you will maintain the relationship with the person that you had the conflict with."

Say, "Sometimes assertiveness is effective because it allows you to have your needs met without hurting anyone else, it can help you resolve conflict and it helps you remain calm under pressure. Sometimes you need to be assertive when people are asking you to do things that you don't want to do or feel are wrong."

Say, "Now let's look at some tips that will help us to be assertive."

Distribute handout - Tips for Being Assertive. Have participants take turns reading each point and generate discussion about the handout.

Say, "So now that we know what assertiveness is like, why do you think that it might be a useful skill to learn?"

Allow participants to express their ideas. List should include:

- Creates a sense of personal satisfaction
- Helps you get what you want
- Increases your sense of being in control
- Increases your sense of being honest
- Increases respect and admiration from other people



Refusal Skills

Continued...

Say, "There's no need to answer aloud, but think about if there were times when you've had friends ask you to do something you didn't want to do but you said "yes" just because you didn't want them to be angry with you? Knowing what you know now, what could you have done differently?"

Say, "While assertiveness can be a helpful tool, for many of us it is a difficult skill to learn. Some people are brought up to be assertive so it is a skill that they can use easily. But for most of us, assertiveness is something that we have to practice a great deal in order to do it well."

Say, "While assertive communication may sometimes seem like a disrespectful way to communicate, there are situations where it can be very important, for instance to keep yourself or others safe. When are some other times you might want to use assertive communication?"

Allow for responses. List may include:

- Community meetings
- Asking a teacher for missing assignments
- Talking to teachers/coaches
- Talk about how to have healthy debates, and the importance of having that skill

Say, "Now we want to look at some steps for making refusals."

Distribute - Refusing Respectfully and read handout.

Say, "According to the handout, there are steps we can take to make a refusal respectfully:

- Stop and think about what you want
- Make the decision that is best for you
- Communicate your decision by first stating your position
- Explain your reason
- Express understanding
- OR
- Offer some alternative things to do

Say, "How might assertive behavior differ among cultures and generations?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Remember, taking the steps to be assertive allows you to take a firm stand, express your opinions, feelings, and needs without hurting anybody's feelings."

Steps to Resolve Conflict

- **Control emotions.** Use relaxation techniques. Take yourself out of the situation. Express your feelings assertively.
- **Identify the reason for the conflict.** Identify the reason for the conflict. If it is needed, take time away from the person to think about the conflict and plan a strategy to resolve.
- **Ask the person.** Does he/she have time to talk?
- **Tell the person how you are feeling** (e.g., "I am feeling upset right now").
- **Tell the person why you are feeling like you are** (e.g., "You have not paid your share of the rent for the last two months").
- **Listen. Listen. Listen.** Allow the person to respond.
- **Discuss alternatives.** Discuss with the person different alternatives for resolving the conflict.
- **Discuss calmly.** Continue to talk about the issue in a calm manner.
- **If the conflict can't be resolved.** If the conflict seems to escalate and you find that you are getting angry, tell the person that you need to leave and you would like to talk about it later.
- **Seek help.** If these steps aren't working or if you don't feel comfortable resolving a conflict, seek mediation — someone you trust to help you solve the problem.

Tips for Being Assertive

- **Eye contact:** Being direct involves some eye contact but do not stare at people 100 percent of the time. May be different when communicating with tribal elders
- **Body posture:** Try to face the person. Stand or sit up tall
- **Distance / physical contact:** If you smell or feel the other person's breath, you are probably too close. Keep a comfortable distance
- **Gestures:** Use hand gestures to add to what you are saying
- **Facial expressions:** Your face should match your emotion and what you are saying. A pleasant face is best when you are happy. A serious face is best when you are upset
- **Voice tone, inflection and volume:** In order to be heard you have to pay attention to the tone of your voice (happy, whiny, upset), the inflection of your voice (emphasis on syllables), and volume of your voice (whisper to yell)
- **Fluency:** It is important to get out your words. If a person stammers or rambles on, the listener will get bored
- **Timing** is important. If you have to express negative feelings or make a request of someone, do it as soon as there is a time for both parties to resolve their issues alone
- **Listening:** If you are making statements that express your feelings, you need to give the other person a chance to respond
- **Content:** What a person says is one of the most important parts of the assertive message

Refusing Respectfully

Scenario:

A friend asks you to spend the night on a school night.

Practice the below refusal skills examples by going around in a circle using the above scenario.

Stop and think about what you want.

- Think: "Do I really want to spend the night?"

Make the decision that is best for you.

- Think: "No, I don't think I want to spend the night tonight, it's a school night and I have homework."

Communicate your decision assertively by first stating your position.

- State: "No, that is not a good idea for me."

Explain your reason.

- Explain: "It's a school night and I have homework to do."

Express understanding.

- Express: "I know how you are feeling, I get bored on school nights too."

Offer alternatives.

- Suggest: "I think I can make plans to spend the night over the weekend, how does that sound?"



Assertive Refusal

Continued...

Role Play 1 of 2

The facilitator and co-facilitator should now role-play for the group an assertive refusal.

Facilitator: "Hey, how about we skip work today and go shopping?"

Co-facilitator: "No, I can't because I need the money that I make from this job. I know how you feel, though, because sometimes I feel like taking time off of work. Why don't we go shopping on one of our days off?"

Say, "Did you notice how she used the steps?"

1. She first thought about what would be best for her.
2. She made a decision that was best for her.
3. She stated her position, "No, I can't."
4. She explained her reason, "I can't because I need the money that I make from this job."
5. She expressed understanding, "I know how you feel, though, sometimes I feel like taking time off of work."
6. She offered an alternative, "Why don't we go shopping on one of our days off?"

Role Play 2 of 2

Facilitator: "Hey, I heard that there is going to be a party this weekend at Dave's house. Do you want to go?"

Co-facilitator: "No, I can't go to his parties because I don't drink and he always has drinking at his parties. Why don't we go to a movie instead?"

Say, "Did you notice how the steps were used in this situation?"

Go over steps.



Refusal Of Harmful Behavior

Continued...

Say, "When practicing refusals of harmful behavior, it is not appropriate to make understanding statements. For example, you would not want to say, "I'm sorry I can't cut school with you but I hope you find someone else."

Say, "In this case it is most important to focus on the refusal and the reason and to support your friends in making the best decisions."

A Right To Say "No"

Say, "Remember you have a right to say "no" whenever you want to. There are some situations where it might not be wise to say "no." For example, if you are driving down the street and a police officer asks you to pull over. Yes, you have the right to say "no" but you will have to accept the consequences that go along with saying "no". Also, can anyone think of a time with your family or community where it would be disrespectful to say "no"?"

Say, "Can you think of some examples of real-life situations where you might have to make assertive refusals?"

Allow for responses.

**If time allows, ask youth to practice refusal skills in pairs.*



Opiates

5 minutes

Say, "The next drug that we will be talking about is opiates. Before we look at the handout, who can tell me what some common opiates are?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "Yes. Oxycodone, Codeine, Darvon, Morphine, Percodan, Talwin, Dilaudid, Demerol, and Methadone are common types of opiates.

Say, "Can anyone guess why opiates are so addictive?"

Allow for responses.

Say, "The reason opiates are so addictive is because of the way they work. Opiates induce pain relief and trigger a feeling of pleasure. Long-term use of opiates actually changes the way the brain works. The cells can get so used to having opiates that they can't work without it! If nerve cells dependent on opiates become deprived they become overactive and cause withdrawal symptoms. What do you think the risks of taking opiates are?"

Allow for responses. List could include:

- infection of the heart valves
- skin abscesses
- congested lungs
- liver disease
- tetanus
- serum hepatitis
- anemia
- pneumonia
- inflammation of the veins
- cardiac disease
- IV drug users place themselves at greater risk of contracting the HIV/AIDS virus
- The user never knows whether the next dose will be unusually potent, leading to overdose, coma, and possible death

Distribute handout - Opiates and briefly discuss contents.

Opiates

Opiates (often called narcotics) work by depressing the central nervous system. The drug induces pain relief and triggers a feeling of pleasure. Opiates that are commonly used in medical settings or that are prescribed by doctors are: Oxycodone, Codeine, Darvon, Morphine, Percodan, Talwin, Dilaudid, Demerol, and Methadone. Any of these drugs can be highly addictive.

Slang Terms for Opiates

Little D for Dilaudid, Dollie for Methadone, M and Miss Emma for Morphine, Dover's Powder for Opium, School Boy of Codeine, Oxycodone: Oxys, OC, beans, 30s, 80s, candy.

Heroin

Heroin is an illegal, highly addictive opiate. It is the most abused and fastest acting opiate. Heroin triggers regions of the brain responsible for producing both the pleasurable sensation of reward and physical addiction. Addiction is marked by the need for continuous, repeated use of the drug (craving). If drug use is discontinued, significant and painful physical withdrawal symptoms occur. Heroin can be injected, smoked or snorted, eye drops.

Short-Term Effects

Shallow breathing • euphoria • reduced hunger • decreased sex drive • drowsiness • cramps • nausea/ vomiting • lethargy • heaviness of limbs • constipation • raw, red nostrils from snorting • excessive itching and scratching • nod off

Long-Term Effects

Malnutrition due to extreme loss of appetite and weight • needle tracks or punctures, scars along veins, abscess • black and blue marks from "skin popping" • reduced vision • tremors • irritability • tolerance • psychological dependence • apathy • loss of ability to concentrate • loss of judgment and self-controls

Long-term use of opiates actually changes the way the brain works. The cells get so used to having heroin present they can't work without it! If dependent nerve cells are deprived of opiates they become overactive and cause withdrawal symptoms. Eventually they will work normally if opiates are not taken.

Withdrawal Symptoms

Watery eyes and runny nose • panic • chills • sweating • nausea • coma • muscle cramps • increased respiratory rate/blood pressure • convulsions • insomnia • respiratory arrest

Medical Risks

Infection of the heart valves • skin abscesses • congested lungs • liver disease • tetanus • serum hepatitis • anemia • pneumonia • inflammation of the veins • cardiac disease • IV drug users place themselves at greater risk of contracting the HIV/AIDS virus • The user never knows whether the next dose will be unusually potent, leading to overdose, coma, and possible death. Risk of cutting agents are dangerous.

Slang Terms for Heroin

Horse, Junk, Mexican Brown, Skag, Hard Stuff and Smack, Black Tar, "H," brown, anti-freeze, balloon, bomb, brown sugar, caca.

Oxycodone

Oxycodone is a prescribed pain medication sold under the trade names OxyContin, Percocet and Percodan that is rapidly becoming a problem. It has high abuse potential because it has heroin-like effects that last up to 12 hours. People who abuse oxycodone often chew the tablets or crush them into a powder that can be smoked, snorted or dissolved in water for injection. Taking chewed or crushed tablets can lead to the rapid release and absorption of a potentially toxic dose of oxycodone. Hundreds of people have died after overdosing in this way. (Note: Cocaine [Crack] is an opiate but is discussed in the Stimulant handout.)

Cultural Component Option(s)

If time allows, consider: having youth listen to the Totem Pole Stories: *Legend of the Hail*. Invite an elder to tell the story.

Follow up questions:

1. Think about how it applies to effective and respectful communication.
2. How do these beliefs and stories relate to effective and respectful communication?
3. Meaningful quote that applies to us today: "In every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations." –The Great Law of the Iroquois Nation.

Other Options:

- Role-play effective communication (i.e. presenting at Tribal Council)
- Practice story telling by participants, with Elders/Mentors as audience
- Find a traditional story that illustrates effective communication
- Listening, learning, practicing is the traditional way
- Have youth interview a council person about meetings with other tribes and good communication

**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 examined different methods people use to communicate. We learned how to make effective refusals and express feelings assertively. This addresses our Mental health."

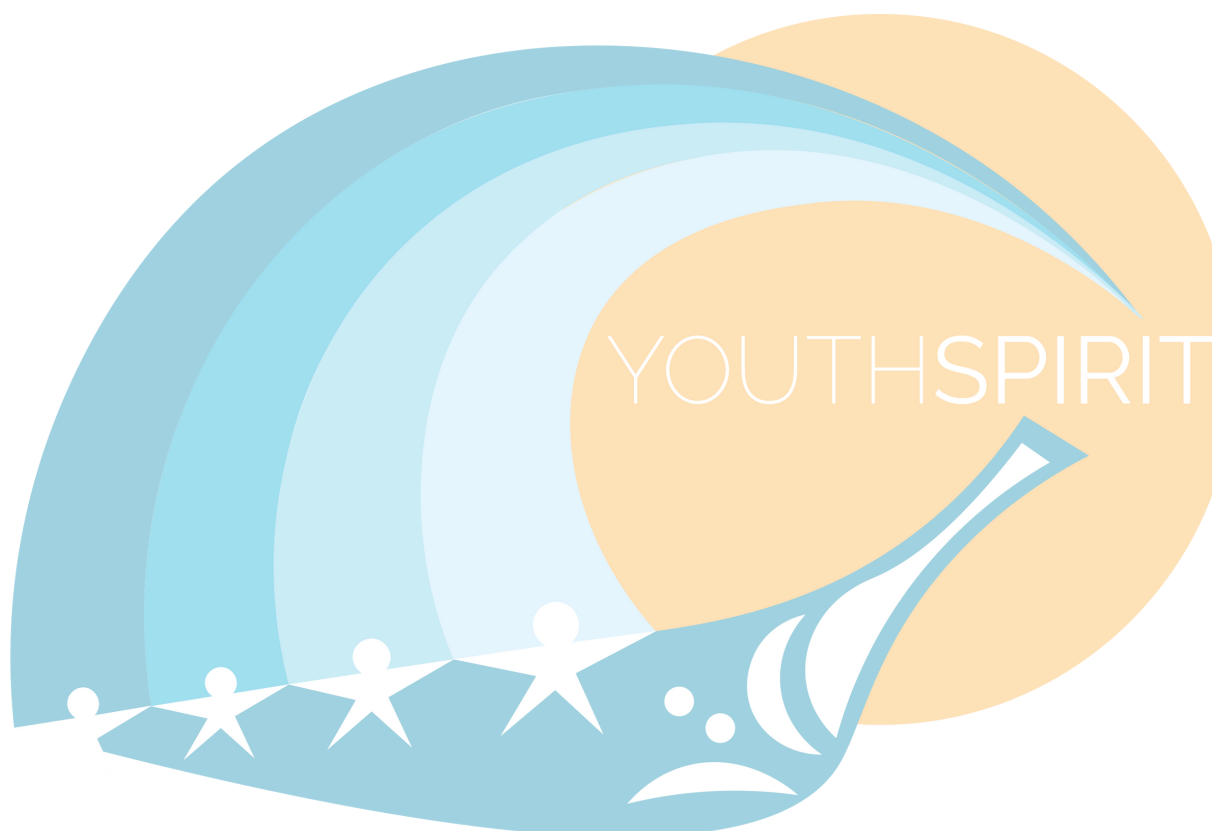
Say, "Being able to communicate effectively allows us to be content with ourselves. We learned that making a firm stand builds confidence. This addresses our Spiritual health."

Say, "We learned that if we communicate aggressively, it is not healthy for the body. We learned how communicating effectively and assertively can actually relieve stress. This addresses our Physical health."

Say, "We learned that if we communicate directly and effectively, we will see ourselves as having strength to face difficult situations. We learned that expressing our feelings assertively can cause us to have more confidence and have a sense of well-being. This addresses 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 11
Youth Handout
#7

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.