

PEACEMAKING PROJECT

CURRICULUM ABSTRACT

By: Nora Antoine

1. Listening & Communication with “Wacantaognaka or Generosity”
2. Fundamentals of Conflict and “Wowacintanka or Fortitude”
3. Peacemaking as “Yuonihan or Respect”
4. Fundamentals of Wowahwala Wiconi “Woksape or Wisdom”

LISTENING AND COMMUNICATION WITH WACANTOGNAKA

A series of activities reinforced the importance of *listening* as a peacemaker. Students participated in the role of “listener” and “speaker” and most agreed that while listening was the easier task initially, upon deeper examination, most students agreed that listening with one’s whole self (ears, eyes, mind and entire body) needed further practice and attention.

Summarizing messages as an activity was an important training exercise. During an actual peacemaking session it will be important for the peacemaker to actively listen to each party and at times, accurately summarize back to each party their words to reinforce to each party that they are being heard in an honest and accurate way.

When we offer to share our skills as a peacemaker, we embody the Lakota value of GENEROSITY. As one of our elders stated, “The best gift we can ever give is of ourselves by sharing our time with others who are in need of help.”

FUNDAMENTALS OF CONFLICT USING WOWACINTANKA

Students were provided with a framework to become aware of the fundamentals of conflict. Conflict is present in our lives in a variety of forms and therefore, conflict is a fact of life. We understand that just as we are not born to walk or talk, we are not born with an innate sense of understanding conflict and managing conflict in a productive manner. Learning to manage conflict is a vital concept to Peacemaking in our schools, homes and communities.

Students learned about finding a balance along this conflict continuum and the importance of self-regulation. The ability to maintain control over one’s emotions – even and especially during an actual conflict - is an accomplishment in our Lakota value system known as FORTITUDE.



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PEACEMAKING USING YUONIHAN

Lakota people were historically known by others as a warrior society and today, Lakota veterans are highly revered in reservation society further reinforcing the concept of warriorism to our young. It was suggested by one young man during a training session “that to turn away from a fight is seen as a sign of weakness.” The dilemma of teaching peacemaking to reservation young people who espouse to perpetuate this warrior attitude proved to be challenging – especially among our young men.

Traditionally however, Lakota people *referred to themselves* as the “Heart People” denoting the relationship to the Paha Sapa or Black Hills area. An aerial view around this area resembles that of a human heart and our ancestry – knowing this fact – taught the values of humility and compassion. Thus, part of this training hoped to clarify our history to youth and reinforce the importance of making and maintaining healthy relationships utilizing the Lakota value of **RESPECT** as our foundation.

Further reinforcement about promoting healthy relationships are evident through our traditional prayers that are ended with the phrase “Mitakuye Oyasin” which translates to “All of our Relations.” The nature of being a good relative serves as a solid cultural framework for which to manage conflict and vigorously promote peacemaking as vibrant tool for contemporary usage among our men and women, of all ages.

FUNDAMENTALS OF WOWAHWALA WICONI USING WOKSAPE

Peacemaking involves energy that is channeled in order to live a productive and healthful life. Wowahwala Wiconi (pronounced “Woe—wok-wa-la Wee- cho-knee) is a way of life that involves conscious choices to ensure a peaceful existence. Healthy discussions occurred during the training sessions about personal accountability within the context of Peacemaking.

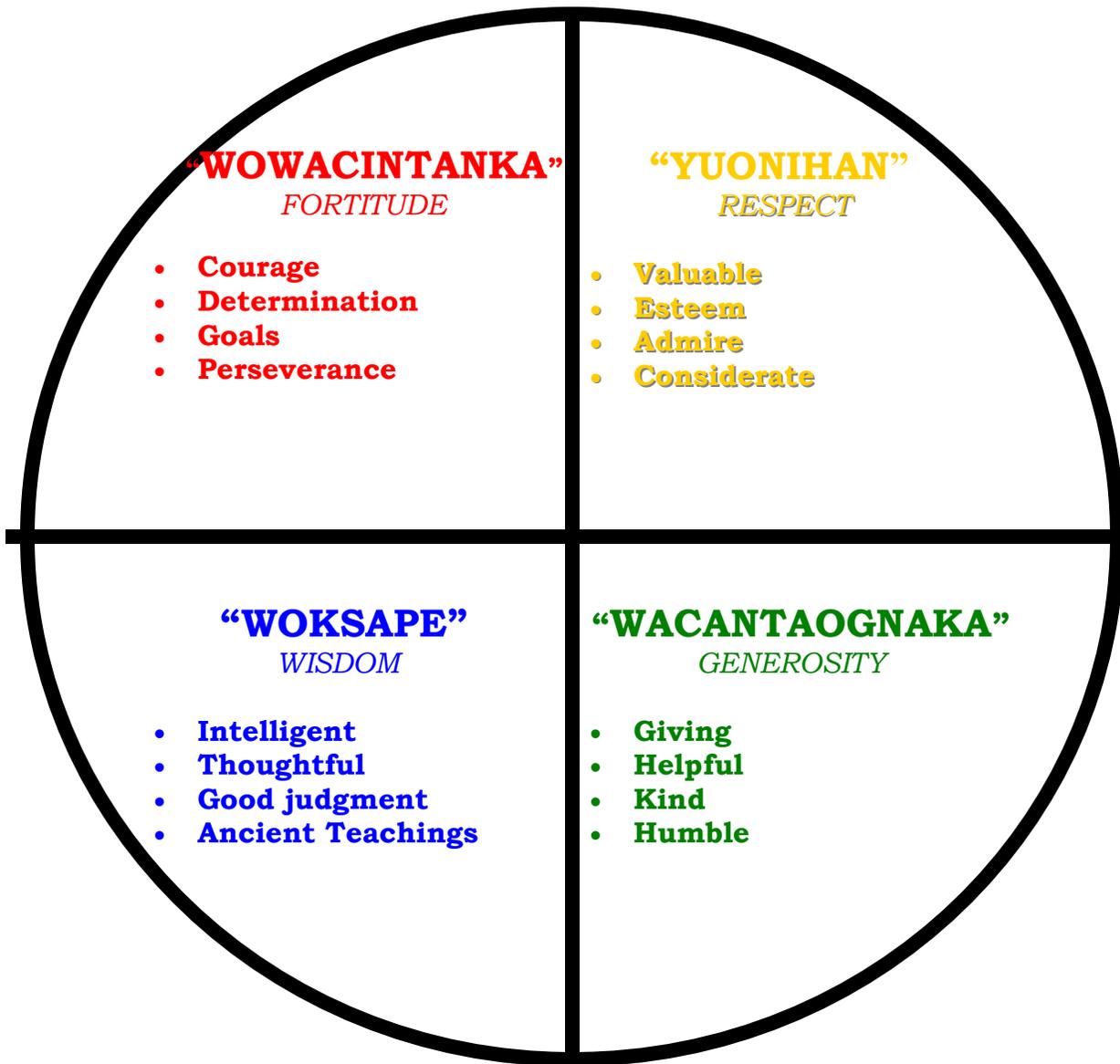
Wowahwala Wiconi is a means towards achieving wisdom. To be wise within the context of Peacemaking entails learning about aligning our own behaviors with that of a person who embodies Lakota values and especially *woksape*. A peacemaker is one who has an assortment of tools from which to access and because we all have the capacity to learn, we exercise the value of wisdom to acquire the essential skills to live a peaceful existence.

Ideally, Wowahwala Wiconi is something we strive towards each day. Within the Lakota value system, **WISDOM** is highly revered because of the hard work, commitment, sacrifice and dedication one needs in order to become wise.



PEACEMAKING WHEEL

WOWOAHWALA WICONI
(TO LIVE A PEACEFUL EXISTENCE)



Peacemaking Wheel and Curriuclum Guide developed by
Nora Antoine of Sinte Gleska University
for the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Court with support by
First Nations Development Institute (2006)





PEACEMAKING PROJECT

A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

Curriculum Abstract:

The goal of this curriculum guide is to introduce the concepts of peacemaking to high school students by increasing a sense of personal awareness about conflict and the role of communications utilizing Lakota values as a framework for discussion.

Assessment:

Assessment is primarily achieved with multiple instruments. Specifically, quantitative data is achieved with pre and post survey instruments (see appendix). Qualitative data was gained through student reflections called, student logs. Peacemaking trainings sessions can be offered in sessions that consist of 20 hours of instruction. At the conclusion of these training sessions, students will experience an increased knowledge about conflict management, improvement of communication skills and learn how Lakota teachings promote peace.

Methodology:

The training sessions are divided into three components. Material is presented via lectures, guest/elder presentations, group discussion and group activities. Students are also required to write at the conclusion of each session. Art and writing projects are incorporated throughout the training sessions. Session #1 develops a sense of personal awareness about conflict and communications to develop interpersonal skills. Session #2 continues with conflict education and personal reactions to conflict situations. This session also introduces peacemaking basics incorporating mainstream views and Lakota cultural perspectives about conflict. Session #3 focuses on learning about Lakota values as well as using these values - today. Various activities are available throughout each session using a variety of grouping processes: small group exercise, dyad grouping and large group. Appropriately, Lakota (tribal) elders who can be called upon as guest speakers, offer traditional wisdom and support for the youth. High school staff called “Peacemaking Mentors” can be involved throughout the planning and implementation of this project. Teachers are encouraged to utilize and expand upon this guide and offer their own perceptions and expertise in their particular areas of content expertise (i.e.: science - biology experiments that monitor the pulse rate of students at peace contrasted with pulse rates of students when they become agitated; social science – form discussion groups to address conflict in their schools; literacy and writing skills – the use of reflective writings after assigned readings to increase subject knowledge about conflict; government and/or history – the role of conflict., civil unrest, etc.

TRAINING SESSION OUTLINE

Session #1:

- Building a Foundation (30-45 Minutes) Teaching Methodology: Lecture, Group, Dyad Activity and Reflection:
 - The nature of conflict (See Handout: Short Lecture – Impact of Conflict)
 - Art Activity (Ask students to draw what conflict looks like to them and ask for volunteers to show their art to others and provide an explanation)
 - Biological/Emotional Impact of Conflict (Ask what emotions arise during a conflict situation for example, pounding heart, sweaty palms, shaky voice, etc. Are these positive or negative emotions.)
 - Cultural Perspective of Conflict (Discussion about how is conflict dealt with in the home, school, community and from a Lakota cultural perspective.)

- The importance of Communication(30-45 Minutes)
 - 5 Minute Dyad Session (Assign students to select a partner they may now know well. Ask one student within the dyad to volunteer first for the role of talker. The other student is the listener. Each talker will talk for 5 minutes – the other student listens and then after 5 minutes – they reverse roles so both students have an opportunity to talk and listen. (Hint: advice the talker to begin by talking about themselves, their family, his/her hobbies, their interests and their concerns or issues that upset them – this should easily take up 5 minutes.) Encourage the student who is listening to be an “active listener” by using their whole self to really listen to their partner – without interrupting for 5 minutes.
 - Body Language, Eye Talk and Internal Talk (In large group, ask each pair to talk about their roles as “talker” and then “listener”. What were some insights to each role, what was challenging/easy about each role? Discuss the distractions (internal dialogue or other noise factors that may take us away from the speaker) and reinforce the importance of good listening.
 - Reflections & Student Logs

TRAINING SESSION OUTLINE

Session #2

- The Experience of Conflict (30-45 minutes) Teaching Methodology: Lecture, Art/Writing Activity, Elder/Mentor Presentation, Discussion Group and Reflection:
 - Activity: (Hand Out – Part I to be completed then hand-out Part II) In order to understand what it means to be a peacemaker, it is important to understand what that experience is like and how it feels to be in conflict. As a conflict impacts all of us, it is important to empathize with others.
 - The fundamentals of Conflict: (Art activity: Ask – what does conflict look like to you?) Describe in words/pictures how conflict impacts relationships.
 - Activity (Triggers) what sets you off? Explain the psychology of “triggers” why do they bother us?
- Peacemaking Basics: A peacemaker’s perceptions of others matters. We are not at our best when we are in conflict. (30-45 minutes)
 - Contemporary issues about conflict: Short lecture - the world of work and why it is important to be able to work well with others and manage conflict. Conflicts within the business setting can be harmful due to increase of stress, employee turn-over, decreases in productivity, sabotage, etc. Research current events in newspapers regarding conflict within business/schools/community, etc. Provide current events of conflicts that have not been remedied in a positive way (war, hostile takeovers, teacher walk-outs, airline strikes, etc.)
 - The importance of relationship (cultural relevance) in understanding that others even while they are in conflict - We see ourselves within a context of a larger group (friends, school, family, community, work, tribe or nation) Provide some context for importance of social groups by asking students what groups are they a part of and why these groups are important to them. When there is conflict within these social constructs, how does resolution take place? How does conflict go away?
 - Activity: Samples of Traditional Peacemaking: Ask community elders and/or other teachers for stories about their recollections of how conflict was dealt with in their home or community. What impact did these stories have on them and how they now deal with conflict?
 - Reflections and Student Logs

TRAINING SESSION OUTLINE

Session #3:

- Peacemaking Wheel (45-75 minutes) Teaching Methodology: Lecture, Small Group, Role Play, Brainstorming and Reflection:
 - Assign small group to answer these questions using the Peacemaking Wheel: Discussion questions: What values can be utilized during Peacemaking Sessions? What values may be difficult to use? Provide examples of how values can be talked about. What more needs to be said of traditional Peacemaking – Elder Input & Mentor Input
- Difficult Conversations Activity Cohort Groups (30-45 minutes)
 - Back to Group - Difficult Conversations
- Role Play Guide & Transcript Review by Cohort Group (30-45 minutes)
 - Form small groups of 4-6, Assign roles and assign a recorder. Read transcript
 - In small group, analyze role of mediators (aka: peacemakers.) Recorder should write down summaries of responses.
 - Back to Large Group-Summarize all small group work on black board – draw conclusions. Ask: How can Peacemaking work in schools?
 - Reflections and Student Logs

Learning Objectives Integrated with Lakota Value System (Refer to Handouts on Lakota Values): Methodology: In the following sections – teachers are encouraged to facilitate discussions to provoke thoughtful responses pertaining to teaching and learning more about the Lakota culture and values.

Listening and Communicating with Generosity (Objectives #1 and #2: Decrease the number of student to student conflicts, student teacher conflicts and Improve interpersonal skills):

A series of activities reinforced the importance of *listening* as a peacemaker. Students participated in the role of “listener” and “speaker” and most agreed that while listening was the easier task initially, upon deeper examination, most students agreed that listening with one’s whole self (ears, eyes, mind and entire body) needed further practice and attention.

Summarizing messages as an activity was an important training exercise. During an actual peacemaking session it will be important for the peacemaker to actively listen to each party and at times, accurately summarize back to each party their words to reinforce to each party that they are being heard in an honest and accurate way.

When we offer to share our skills as a peacemaker, we embody the Lakota value of **GENEROSITY**. The giving of time and energy into listening as a peacemaker is an act of Generosity which is an important Lakota value. As one elder stated, “giving of your time is one of the most sincere gifts we can offer.”

Cultural Activity: Brainstorm ways in which generosity can be visibly demonstrated in our home, school, community? Why is generosity an important attribute today?

Learning Objectives Integrated with Lakota Value System

Fundamentals of Conflict using Fortitude: (Objective #3: Increase knowledge of Conflict Management):

Students were provided with a framework to become aware of the fundamentals of conflict. Conflict is present in our lives in a variety of forms and therefore, conflict is a fact of life. We understand that just as we are not born to walk or talk, we are not born with an innate sense of understanding conflict and managing conflict in a productive manner. Learning to manage conflict is a vital concept to Peacemaking in our schools, homes and communities.

Students learned about the conflict continuum. At one end of the conflict continuum, there is a peaceful state where we feel confident, happy and secure. At the other end of this continuum there is unchecked conflict that is transformed sometimes into extreme aggression where there is fear, confusion, anger. Students learned about finding a balance along this conflict continuum and the importance of self-regulation. The ability to maintain control over one's emotions – even and especially during an actual conflict - is an accomplishment in our Lakota value system known as **FORTITUDE**.

Cultural Activity: What is the role of self-discipline in today's society?
(Examine successful tribal leaders, famous athletes or business leaders – cross reference traits they may share in common concerning self-discipline, planning, perseverance, etc.)

Peacemaking Using Respect (Objective #4: Increase knowledge about Lakota cultural values and their relevance into contemporary society in managing conflict:
(Refer to Map of the Black Hills – See Lakota Star Knowledge, Goodman, SGU Press.)

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Traditionally however, Lakota people *referred to themselves* as the “Heart People” denoting the relationship to the Paha Sapa or Black Hills area. An aerial view around this area resembles that of a human heart and our ancestry – knowing this fact – taught the values of humility and compassion. Thus, part of this training hoped to clarify our history to youth and reinforce the importance of making and maintaining healthy relationships utilizing the Lakota value of **RESPECT** as our foundation.

Further reinforcement about promoting healthy relationships are evident through our traditional prayers that are ended with the phrase “Mitakuye Oyasin” which translates to “All of our Relations.” The nature of being a good relative serves as a solid cultural framework for which to manage conflict and vigorously promote peacemaking as vibrant tool for contemporary usage among our men and women, of all ages.

Cultural Activity: Respect is the cornerstone of many cultures. Discuss the value of respect in Lakota culture and other cultures. How is respect displayed? What are some outcomes of disrespectfulness in our homes, school, community and world?

Fundamentals of Wahwala Wiconi (Objective #4: Increase knowledge about Lakota cultural values and their relevance into contemporary society in managing conflict:

Peacemaking involves energy that is channeled in order to live a productive and healthful life. Wahwala Wiconi (pronounced “Wok-wa-la Wee- cho-knee) is a way of life that involves conscious choices to ensure a peaceful existence. Ideally, Wahwala Wiconi is something to strive towards each day but few fully attain this way. Healthy discussions occurred during the training sessions about personal accountability within the context of Peacemaking.

Wahwala Wiconi is a means towards achieving wisdom. To be wise within the context of Peacemaking entails learning about aligning our own behaviors with that of a person who embodies Lakota values. A peacemaker is one who has an assortment of tools in their tool bag from which to use because we all have the capacity to learn and within the Lakota value system, **WISDOM** is highly revered.

Cultural Activity: What are some ways in which elders symbolize wisdom in Lakota society? How is wisdom revered in our school? Is wisdom revered in our community or nation – why or why not?

Resources & Rationale:

- **Peacemaking Wheel** (Awareness/Promotion of Lakota Culture)
- **Communication/Group Activities** (Increase of Social Skills & Inter-Personal Skill Development)
- **Conflict Education** (Develop personal responsibility and decrease conflict)
- **Assessment Strategy** (Determine increases in awareness/knowledge with qualitative and quantitative instruments)
- **Rubric for Reflections** (Assessment for Student Logs)
- **Web Resources** (Myriad of reasons to support peacemaking (aka: mediation) within school settings)

This curriculum guide was developed for the **Peacemaking Project** sponsored by the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Court with support by First Nations Development Institute.

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