



## Lesson Objectives

1. To understand how lifestyles have changed for indigenous peoples, such as ancestors and elders.
2. To learn from, adapt to, and honor our past for future success.

## Review the Last Chapter

- What are the four parts of a whole healthy person? *[Examples of responses may include: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.]*
- How can we be healthy in these four ways? Physically healthy? Emotionally healthy? Mentally healthy? And spiritually healthy?
- What are some healthy things we can do when we feel stress or upset?



## Helpful Hints

- Some of today's health challenges, like type 2 diabetes, are related to a change in lifestyle.
- This change in lifestyle is related to the history of Native communities.
- In the past, traditional foods and lifestyles helped to keep people fit, healthy, and free from type 2 diabetes.
- Interviewing Elders can help give participants a better sense of community history. Explain to participants that lifestyles in the community have changed over time. Encourage them to try and learn a lot about the past from the Elder(s) who attend today's session.
- Help participants to understand they can use lessons from the past as a guide for being healthy in the present.



## Helpful Hints (continued)

- The Elders should be asked to participate in the whole session. This will include: participating in a group interview and discussion with all the participants, being available to a team of participants as they plan their skit, and then attending the skits about community history.
- Activity 1, "Interview Elders," can give the participants background information for their skits. In Activity 2, "Community History Skit," the Elders can also help participants research different time periods in their community history.
- Elders should all be presented with a gift at the end of the session. The participants can help make small gifts before the Elders arrive. Explain to the participants that giving a gift in appreciation is a way of showing respect to the guest Elders.

## Activity 1: Interview Elders

### Purpose of the Activity

- To encourage participants to learn about their community's past, including traditions and lifestyles, directly from Elders in their community.

### Instructions

1. Identify three to four Elders or cultural experts to come speak with the T.R.A.I.L. group. Ask them if they will stay through the entire session to help with Activity 2 and to attend the community history skit.
2. Ask the Elders to describe old ways and lifestyles of the community and tribe. Let the speakers choose the time period(s) they want to talk about.



### Materials needed

- A group of Elders to serve as guest speakers [Invite three to four Elders or cultural experts, depending on how many teams you will have for Activity 2, "Community History Skit." There should be about one Elder per four to five participants.]
- Questions participants want to ask the Elders, brainstormed before the Elders arrive (see instruction #9 below)
- White board or butcher block paper
- Markers



For example: pre-European contact era, the early-reservation era, or perhaps only as far back as the time of the Elders' own grandparents. If one Elder is comfortable talking about several eras, all the better. Or you might want to ask each of the Elders to talk about a different era.

3. The discussion should focus on how different the lifestyles and ways of life were at that time in comparison to the present. It would be helpful if the discussion includes information such as:
  - a. **Foods:** types of foods eaten then, where they came from, how they were prepared, and how that differs from now, particularly regarding health;
  - b. **Daily activities:** what types of community activities there were, what people did during the day when they were young, what young people did with their free time, and how all that differs from how young people spend their time now, particularly regarding the amount of physical activity involved;
  - c. **Transportation:** how people moved from place to place and how that differs from now, particularly regarding the amount of exercise they got;
  - d. **Housing:** where people lived, what the homes were like, what kinds of household items there were, and how all that differs from now, particularly regarding the ease and convenience of today's lifestyles.
4. Ask your guest Elders to bring in any objects, pictures, etc. they have that might help convey to participants how different the old ways were from what we experience in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
5. Announce to participants that there will be guest speakers. Invite them to ask questions of the Elders. Elders are a very important community resource. They are the keepers of our history and carriers of our culture. Learning from them has been our traditional way for a very long time.
6. Before the Elders start speaking, write the words "era," "pre-contact," and "lifestyle" on the white board or butcher block paper. Ask if anyone knows what the words mean. Discuss the definitions. *[Examples of responses may include: an era is a period in history or a specific point in time. Pre-contact means the time before Indian people had contact with western European people. Lifestyle means the way a person or group lives.]*
7. Introduce the guest Elders. After the presentation is over, allow time for participants to ask the Elders questions.



- 8.** Suggested interview questions for participants to ask Elders:
  - a. What kinds of food did people eat? Where did they get those foods? (e.g., from the wild? farmed? traded? were there convenience and grocery stores like now? were all the same kinds of food available then as now?)
  - b. How did people get from one place to another back then? Did that kind of travel mean they got more or less exercise than we do now? [Note: share with youth that horses were brought to the Americas by the Spaniards; horses were not a mode of transportation in the pre-contact era].
  - c. What kinds of celebrations did the community have?
  - d. What did young people do for fun?
  - e. What did young people do all day?
  - f. What were the houses like then (e.g., style, availability of water, electricity, etc.)?
  - g. What did people do when they got sick? Were there hospitals and clinics?
- 9.** After the participants ask the Elders questions, lead a group discussion about how different the world was for our ancestors and about the differences in lifestyles between then and now.

#### **Suggested group discussion topics:**

- 1.** What were some advantages of living long ago? Disadvantages?
- 2.** What are some advantages of living today? Disadvantages?
- 3.** Is life easier now? Are things more convenient now? How?
- 4.** Have the changes in lifestyles affected our bodies and our health? How?
  - a. Examples: (1) Exercise: do we get as much exercise now that we drive around everywhere? (2) Food: do we sometimes eat too much now, just because food is easy to get from stores and we can keep it fresh for a long time in our refrigerators? Now we have a lot more junk food – is that good for us? (3) Leisure time: Do we sit around in front of smart phones, tablets or televisions a lot now? Is that good for us? What did kids do before they had technology so accessible?
- 5.** What kinds of things should we be doing to keep ourselves healthy now?
- 6.** By the end of your discussion, be sure participants understand that because of all the conveniences we now have, we're faced with new health issues. For example: (1) we have to remember to exercise now (in the past, the absence of cars made exercise an essential part of people's lifestyles); (2) we have to watch what we eat (in the past, food wasn't so easy to get and there weren't lots of sugary and fried foods available).



## Activity 2: Community History Skit

### Purpose of the Activity

- To expand participants' understanding of the culture and history of their community.
- To have participants demonstrate what they've learned about the differences in past and present lifestyles of the community.

### Instructions

1. Identify materials for participants to do research on the history of your local community. If possible, make those materials available for use at the Club site itself. Materials can include books, magazines, newspapers, etc.
2. Divide participants into three or four teams and explain the assignment. Tell them they will be doing some research about the history of their community, then putting on a skit about what they learned. Remind them what they've learned about teamwork, respect, and how important good teamwork is to getting things accomplished.
3. Assign each team a time period for their research. Tell them they need to collect as much information as they can about the community during that point in history. Have the Elders choose a group to coach. The Elder can help the participants with making their skits reflective of the time period. If you invited a community history expert, the participants can use this person as a resource too.
4. Let the participants know where they can find the materials you've identified as resources for their research. Tell them that they can also use their "Elder coach" as a resource.
5. Using the time period they were assigned, tell participants to spend about 20-30 minutes making up a skit that shows what life was like during that era. Skits should be about five minutes each.
6. Everyone should be actively involved in either planning or performing in their team's skit. Some participants won't want to act in the skit. That's fine; they can be involved in another way. Encourage them to do the directing or set/costume design instead.



### Materials needed

- Pads of paper
- Pens
- Computer with internet access
- Interesting objects to serve as props for the skit
- Clothing that can be used for costumes
- Skit Starters resource page on [www.NAClubs.org](http://www.NAClubs.org)
- Gifts participants made to show their appreciation for the Elders



7. Have the teams perform their skits. Then have a group discussion about the skits. Be sure to give each team encouraging feedback about their skit.
8. Present each guest Elder with a gift at the end of the skits.



## Talking Circle

- What did we learn today about our community's history?
- What are ways that our ancestors kept themselves healthy?
- What lessons about being healthy can we learn from our community history?
- How can we use those lessons to stay healthy today?



## Optional Activities

*Found on [www.NAClubs.org](http://www.NAClubs.org).*

- Teach an Elder!
- Making Smart Decisions
- Our Local History of Decision Making
- Time Travelers



## Behavioral Health

*Found on [www.NAClubs.org](http://www.NAClubs.org).*

- Resiliency Lesson
- Resiliency Activity(ies)