

Our Local History of Decision Making

1. Ask the group to research how during their previous history, Tribal members made decisions and solved problems. This could include:
 - A discussion of the useful role that Elders, who have accumulated great knowledge, can play in teaching us how to handle situation
 - About the time when a formal tribal council was held
 - What role a Tribal Chief played
 - Seeking advice from the spiritual leader or the medicine man in the community
 - The importance of thinking positively
 - How a situation can take on an entirely different light when we change our beliefs, thoughts, or attitudes about a situation

2. Illustrate decision making through an example:
 - Sometimes we are afraid to try things that we have never done before. We may think we will have a hard time being successful or we may imagine that people will laugh at our attempts. We may not try at all because we are so fearful of what could happen.
 - If we change our thinking and remember that everything is new to us at one point and the only way we learn to do something is to try, we may try something and find that we really enjoy it.

3. Determine through conversations with knowledgeable people from the community whether there is a tendency, as is evident in some Native cultures, to avoid thinking or talking about negative concepts because of the belief that merely thinking about these things can cause them to come true.

4. Discuss with the group how talking about a possible problem or situation before it occurs can help you plan the most effective prepared response. Compare and contrast this to how becoming obsessively worried about the possibilities that may occur can end up paralyzing a person from doing anything or can cause stress and other mental/emotional problems.

5. Include a story from local culture about how the tribe may have contemplated the negatives of not having enough food or going to war by demonstrating how they planned to deal with those issues and how they took action rather than accepting a more passive stance of simply worrying about the emergence of the problem.