

Time Travelers

Purpose of this Activity:

1. To encourage participants to think about how changes in lifestyles can affect people's health – for the good and the bad

Materials Needed:

- A large piece of paper or white board
- Markers

Instructions:

1. Depending on what historical era(s) your Elder interview focused on, divide a large piece of paper, or the wipe board, into two or three columns.
2. The right column heading should be "Present Day." The other one or two columns should have headings consistent with the era(s) discussed by the guest elder (e.g., Pre-contact Era, Early Reservation Era, Early 20th Century Era, etc.). You might want to refer to the Historical Timeline in the chapter resources section on www.NAClubs.org.
3. Starting with the historical era column(s), ask youth to help you list things about the lifestyles of that era.

Suggested Questions:

1. What types of food did people eat? Where did they get those foods? (e.g., Were they from the wild? Where they grown or farmed? Were they traded? Were there convenience and grocery stores? Were all the same types of food available then as now?)
2. 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: make sure kids know that horses were brought to the Americas by the Spaniards; so horses were not a mode of transportation in pre-contact era]*
3. What types of celebrations did the community have? How did those events make the community feel as a group?
4. What did young people do for fun?
5. What did youth do all day?
6. What were the houses like then? (e.g., style of housing, running water, electricity, etc.)
7. What did people do when they got sick? Were there hospitals and clinics?
8. After the historical columns are filled in, have participants help you complete the "Present Day" column, answering comparable questions.
9. After all the columns are completed, have a group discussion about how different the world was for our Native ancestors and about the differences in lifestyles between then and now.

Suggested Group Discussion:

1. What were some advantages about living long ago? Disadvantages?
2. What are some advantages about living today? Disadvantages?
3. Is life easier now? Are things more convenient now?
4. Have the changes in lifestyles affected our bodies and our health? How?

Examples:

- Exercise: do we get as much exercise now that we drive around everywhere?
 - Food: do we sometimes eat too much now, just because food is easy to get (from grocery stores) and we can keep it fresh for a long time in our refrigerators? Now we have lots of processed and junk food – is that good for us?
 - Leisure time: Do we sit around in front of televisions a lot now? Is that good for us? What did youth do before they had televisions?)
5. What kinds of things should we be doing to keep ourselves healthy now?
 6. By the end of your discussion, be sure youth understand that because of all the conveniences we now have, we're faced with some new health issues. For example:
 - We have to remember to exercise now (in the past, the absence of cars made exercise an essential part of people's lifestyles);
 - 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).

Adapted from the Sandy Lake First Nation School Diabetes Prevention Program, Grade 3 curriculum, Unit 3, Yesterday and Today.