

FAMILY DYNAMICS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE



EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE ON OUR FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this unit is to actively involve students in examining what substance abuse is and how it affects individuals and family members. Active learning is central to this unit. Encourage all students to get involved. The unit makes extensive use of Talking Circles. The Talking Circles provide an opportunity for students to share ideas and work collectively on projects. Use the Talking Circles Rules Poster to introduce the concept before beginning the unit. The lessons also ask each group to select a messenger who will summarize the group's discussion and share this information with the entire class. Each group should select a messenger before beginning the unit. The messenger's responsibilities can be reassigned periodically.

FAMILY DYNAMICS

UNIT OUTLINE

GOAL: Students will increase their knowledge of:

- The effects of substance abuse on family relationships across multiple generations.

OBJECTIVES: Students will be able to:

- Define Substance Abuse.
- Identify at least three characteristics of a substance abuser.
- Identify at least three behaviors common to family members who live with a substance abuser.
- Identify at least five substance abuse risk factors.
- Describe how substance abuse risk factors are experienced across several generations in a family.
- Describe positive cultural teachings about parental and family responsibility.

METHODS: The teaching/learning methods include:

- Brainstorming
- Small Group Problem Solving and Consensus
- Lecture
- Classroom Discussion

FAMILY DYNAMICS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE INDEX

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LESSONS: Lessons include:	
1) What is Substance Abuse?	5
2) Characteristics of Substance Abusers and Their Families	7
3) Substance Abuse Across Multiple Generations	10
4) Defining Denial and Enabling	17
5) Cultural Teachings About Parental and Family Responsibilities	20

MATERIALS: The teaching aids and materials in supplemental packet include:

A) Worksheets/Group Study Guides	Item
1) What is Substance Abuse Brainstorming Guide	FD#1
2) Risk Factor Brainstorming Guide	FD#2
3) Substance Abuse Across Multiple Generations Handout	FD#3
4) Federal Indian Policy Periods and The Use of Alcohol Handout	FD#4
5) Family Roles and Responsibilities Brainstorming Guide	FD#5
B) Lecture Notes/Transparencies	

1) Characteristics of a Substance Abuser	FD/T# 1
2) Effects of Substance Abuse on the Family	FD/T#2
3) Characteristics of Denial	FD/T#3
4) Characteristics of Enabling	FD/T#4

OTHER MATERIALS:

1) Talking Circles Rules Poster	4
2) Substance Abuse Across Multiple Generations Poster	13
3) Messages from Our Elders Poster	23

TALKING CIRCLE RULES

- LISTEN QUIETLY WHEN SOMEONE IS TALKING
- EVERYONE'S IDEAS ARE IMPORTANT



- NO PUT DOWNS
- IT'S OKAY TO JUST LISTEN

NAME OF ACTIVITY: What is Substance Abuse?

UNIT: Family Dynamics of Substance Abuse

LEVEL: 7-12

TIME REQUIRED: 30 minutes

When the student has completed this activity, he/she will be able to:

OBJECTIVE:

- Define Substance Abuse

RESOURCES:

- What is Substance Abuse Brainstorming Guide
- Newsprint or a Chalkboard

PROCEDURE:

- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to define and examine the term substance abuser.
- Ask students to form Talking Circles. Distribute one brainstorming guide to each group. Remind the messenger that he/she is responsible for completing the guide and reporting to the whole class.
- Ask each group to collectively complete their guide. The messenger records the responses.
- Ask the messengers to present a summary of their group's ideas.
- Ask for a volunteer to record the ideas presented by the messengers on the board or newsprint using a format like the format in the brainstorming guide.
- When the combined list is completed, ask the class to develop a definition of substance abuse based on the ideas presented.

CLOSURE: Explain that during the next class session the group will examine another definition of substance abuse and some of the risk factors associated with becoming a substance abuser.

WHAT IS SUBSTANCE ABUSE?

The purpose of this guide is to assist you in developing a definition of substance abuse. To approach this in a systematic way the format below is provided. Use the chart to identify behaviors and consequences or outcomes of behaviors common to people who abuse alcohol and other drugs.

	INDIVIDUAL	FAMILY
PHYSICAL (Behaviors & Consequences)		
MENTAL (Behaviors & Consequences)		
EMOTIONAL (Behaviors & Consequences)		
SPIRITUAL (Behavior & Consequences)		
SOCIAL (Behavior & Consequences)		
OTHER (Behavior & Consequences)		

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Characteristics of Substance Abuses and Their Families

UNIT: Family Dynamics of Substance Abuse

LEVEL: 7-12

TIME REQUIRED: 30 Minutes

When the student has completed this activity, he/she will be able to:

OBJECTIVES:

- Define substance abuse
- Identify at least three characteristics of substance abuser.
- Identify at least three behaviors common to family members who live with a substance abuser.

RESOURCES:

- Characteristics of a Substance Abuser (FD/T#1)
- Effects of Substance Abuse on the Family (FD/T#2)

PROCEDURES:

- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to examine behaviors and characteristics common to substance abusers and to examine how substance abuse effects families.
- Present lecture material on characteristics and effects on families.
- Encourage students to ask questions as you present materials.
- Review the main concepts.

CLOSURE:

Explain that during the next class session the group will examine how substance abuse risk factors are experienced across several generations.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUBSTANCE ABUSER

SUBSTANCE ABUSE DEFINED:

Use of mood-altering substance which exceeds social or legal standards of acceptable behavior.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUBSTANCE ABUSER:

The specific characteristics of a substance abuser vary in type and severity. Some of the characteristics are listed below:

- Regular use to intoxication.
- Inability to function in a social setting without being intoxicated.
- Excessive spending on alcohol or other drugs that results in an inability to meet financial obligations.
- Loss of friends due to behavior while intoxicated.
- Alcohol or other drug use that prohibits one from meeting work, family, school, or other social obligations.
- Driving after consuming sufficient chemicals to be considered legally impaired.
- Inability to abstain from use.
- Binge use, such as remaining intoxicated throughout the day for two or more days.
- Blackouts while intoxicated.

EFFECTS OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE ON THE FAMILY

- The family of a substance abuser is usually the first group to feel painful consequences.
- The substance abuser often blames his/her family and sometimes convinces family members that they are to blame.
- When the substance abuser is not actively using, family members often feel they must be careful to avoid upsetting him/her and **causing** him/her to drink.
- The family often feels responsible for **curing** the substance abuser.
- The children observe unhealthy drinking or other drug use habits.
- The children often learn about disappointment and unkept promises.

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Substance Abuse Across Multiple Generations

UNIT: Family Dynamics of Substance Abuse

LEVEL: 7-12

TIME REQUIRED: 30 Minutes

When the student has completed this activity, he/she will be able to:

OBJECTIVE:

- Identify at least five substance abuse risk factors.
- Describe how substance abuse risk factors are experienced across several generations.

RESOURCES:

- Risk Factor Brainstorming Guide (FD#2)
- Substance Abuse Across Multiple Generation Poster and Handout (FD#3)
- Federal Indian Policy Periods and the Use of Alcohol Handout (FD#4)

PROCEDURE:

- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to examine substance abuse risk factors and how these risk factors can affect a family over several generations.
- Ask students to form Talking Circles. Distribute copies of the “Federal Indian Policy Periods and the Use of Alcohol,” and a Risk Factors Brainstorming Guide. Remind the messenger that he/she is responsible for completing the brainstorming guide and reporting to the whole class.
- Ask students to collectively complete the Guide using the Federal Indian Policy Periods Handout and their own ideas. The messenger records the responses.
- Ask the messengers to report on their group’s discussions.
- When the messengers have completed their reports direct the class attention to the Substance Abuse Across Multiple Generations Poster. Review the risk factors and explain the concept that risk factors are increased as the number of substances abusers in a family increases.
- Ask the messenger to add risk factors identified by the group to the list on the poster.

CLOSURE:

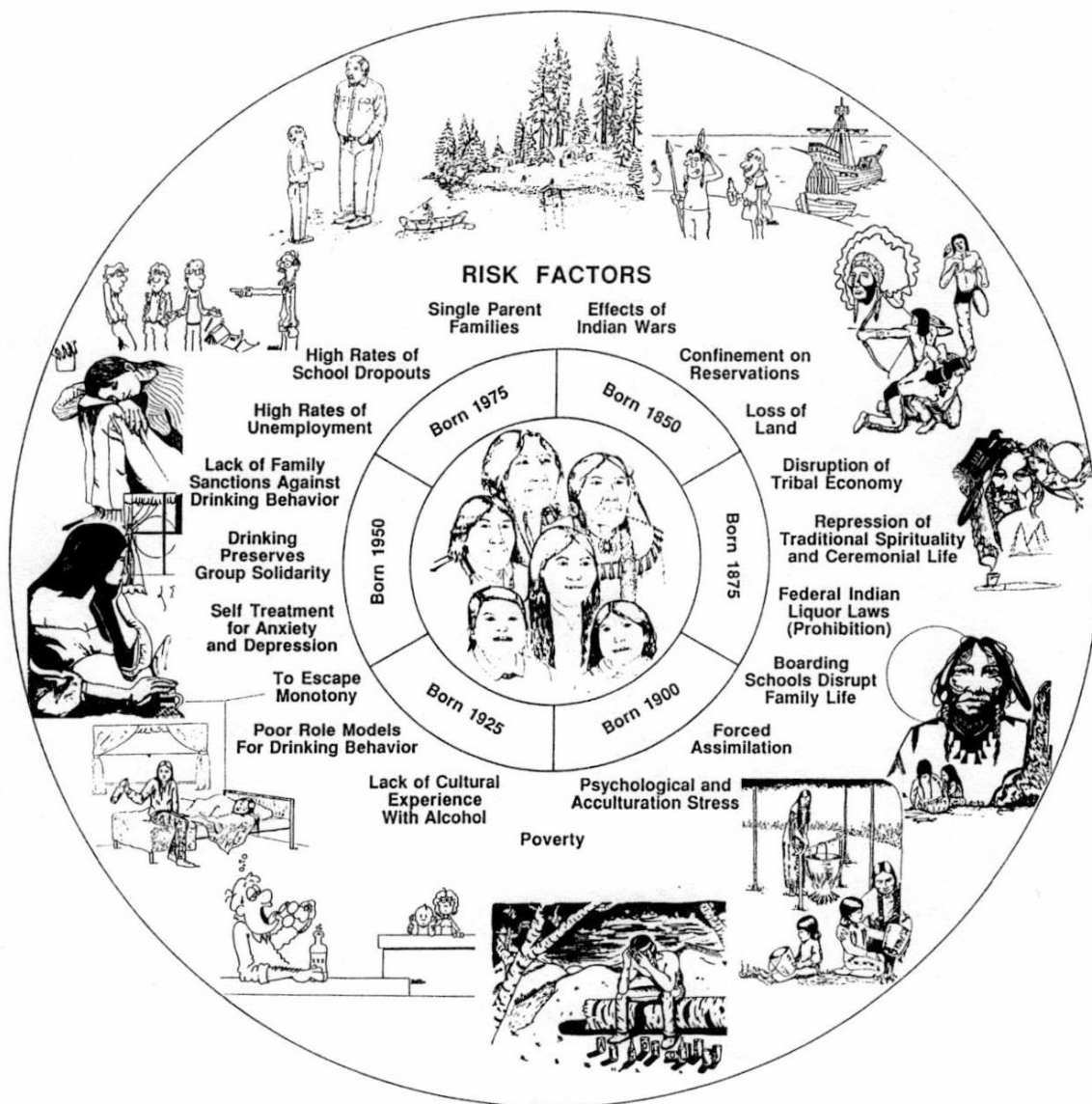
Explain that every family and individual is unique and has adapted to the circumstances of their tribe and community in a variety of ways. Recommend that each student use the Substance Abuse Across Multiple Generations Poster and Handout to identify their risk factors.

RISK FACTOR BRAINSTORMING GUIDE

Directions: Identify the problems faced by Indian people during the various periods that could have contributed to the negative pattern of substance abuse that developed. Use the Federal Indian Policy Periods Handout and your own ideas.

PERIOD	PROBLEMS/RISK FACTORS
Pre-contact	
Treaty period	
Removal period	
Reservation period	
Land allotment	
Indian Reorganization Act	
Termination Period	

SUBSTANCE ABUSE ACROSS MULTIPLE GENERATIONS



Every Native American family has experienced one or more these risk factors. People have adapted in a variety of ways. Some families have very few or no substance abusers, others have experienced this problem over several generations. Children born to families with active or inactive substance abusers are at risk of becoming substance abusers themselves.

FD#4

FEDERAL INDIAN POLICY PERIODS AND THE USE OF ALCOHOL HANDOUT

PERIOD: PRE-CONTACT PERIOD

TIME: Creation to 1492

MAJOR EVENTS: Tribal groups develop and flourish in North, Central and South America

HOW ALCOHOL PLAYED A ROLE: Alcohol was not used in North America. The use of alcohol and drugs in Central and South America was limited to ceremonial practices.

PERIOD: TREATY PERIOD

TIME: 1778-1871

MAJOR EVENTS: Numerous treaties signed between the U.S. Government and Native American tribes. Treaty period ends with a Congressional Act to discontinue treaty making.

HOW ALCOHOL PLAYED A ROLE: Alcohol was used as a negotiating tool in the treaty making process. Alcoholism and alcohol use become a serious problem. Tribal leaders request restrictions on the sale of alcohol.

PERIOD: REMOVAL PERIOD

TIME: 1830-1850

MAJOR EVENTS: Tribes living east of the Mississippi were forced to move west of the Mississippi. Creation of reservations. Assimilation of Native Americans becomes public policy. Federal "Indian" boarding schools are developed for the purpose of assimilating Native American people into American society. Many children are removed from their families to attend boarding school.

HOW ALCOHOL PLAYED A ROLE: Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse continues to be a problem. In 1832, legislation was passed making it illegal to sell alcohol to American Indians. Sense of powerlessness grows among them.

PERIOD: RESERVATION PERIOD

TIME: 1850-1887

MAJOR EVENTS: Number of reservations grows. Number of boarding schools grows. White settlers expand into the west.

HOW ALCOHOL PLAYED A ROLE: Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse continues as a problem. Bootlegging is widespread, prohibition policy does not work well in preventing alcoholism. Rapid cultural change.

PERIOD: LAND ALLOTMENT

TIME: 1887-1934

FD#4

MAJOR EVENTS: Dawes Act establishes a system to allot reservations land to individuals and families to allow unallotted lands to be sold to white settlers. Traditional economy altered and dependency on the Bureau of Indian Affairs grows. Native Americans granted citizenship in 1924. Meriam Report is issued criticizing federal Indian policies.

HOW ALCOHOL PLAYED A ROLE: ALCOHOLISM AND ALCOHOL ABUSE continues as a problem. Rapid cultural change. Breakdown of tribal land and economic base.

PERIOD: INDIAN REORGANIZATION ACT

TIME: 1934-1950

MAJOR EVENTS: Indian Reorganization Act ends the allotment system and provides a mechanism for chartering and reorganizing tribal groups. Johnson O'Malley Act authorizes funds to states for the education of Native Americans.

HOW ALCOHOL PLAYED A ROLE: Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse continues to be a problem. Rapid cultural change. Breakdown of tribal land and economic base.

PERIOD: TERMINATION PERIOD

TIME: 1953-1965

MAJOR EVENTS: Pressure builds in Congress to transfer trust land to non- Native American ownership and to terminate tribes from federal protection. Numerous tribes are terminated from federal protection, 2.5 million acres of land is removed from federal trust status.

HOW ALCOHOL PLAYED A ROLE: In 1953, prohibition for Indian people is ended after 121 years as a public policy.

PERIOD: SELF-DETERMINATION

TIME: 1965-Present

MAJOR EVENTS: The termination policy is rejected as ineffective. Report on "Indian Education A National Tragedy-A National Challenge." is published in 1969. *The Indian Education Act* is passed in 1972, to meet the special educational needs Native American students. *Indian Self-Determination Act* is passed to "promote maximum participation of Native Americans in the government and education of Native American people," 1975.

HOW ALCOHOL PLAYED A ROLE: Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse continue to be a problem. It is estimated that up to 40% of the adult Native American population has an alcoholism or alcohol abuse problem. This means that 100% of the population is affected by alcoholism through family members.

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Defining Denial and Enabling

UNIT: Family Dynamics of Substance Abuse

LEVEL: 7-12

TIME REQUIRED: 30 Minutes

When the student has completed this activity, he/she will be able to:

OBJECTIVE:

- Describe the concepts of denial and enabling.

RESOURCES:

- Characteristics of Denial (FD/T#3)
- Characteristics of Enabling (FD/T#4)

PROCEDURE:

- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to examine ways in which family members often deny the existence of a substance abuse problem and enable the substance abuser to continue his/her harmful behavior.
- Present lecture material on Characteristics of Denial and Enabling.
- Encourage students to ask questions as you present.
- Review the main concepts.

CLOSURE: Ask the students to discuss the following questions:

- Describe how you think you would feel if you disclaimed (minimize or ignore) your feelings and needs for a long period of time.
- What might happen in a family if everyone starts to deny their feelings and needs? (To adjust to living with a substance abuser)
- Describe reasons family members might give for assuming the responsibilities of a substance abuser.
- Describe the consequences family members might experience as a result of denial and enabling.
- Describe the consequences the individual substance abuser might experience.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DENIAL

Denial is the unconscious disclaiming of:

THOUGHTS
FEELINGS
WISHES
NEEDS, OR
SITUATIONS

Denial is focused on:

THOUGHTS
FEELINGS
WISHES, OR
SITUATIONS

That are consciously unacceptable to the individual.

EXAMPLES:

1. "Sure, I've been arrested twice in the past year for drinking and driving, but that doesn't mean I have a drinking problem."
2. "Sure, I drink a lot, but I never lose control like a lot of other people I know."

CHARACTERISTICS OF ENABLING

The substance abuser denies the seriousness of his/her problem and the family enables the abuser to continue his/her destructive behavior.



NAME OF ACTIVITY: Cultural Teachings About Parental and Family Responsibilities

UNIT: Family Dynamics of Substance Abuse

LEVEL: 7-12

TIME REQUIRED: 30 Minutes

When the student has completed this lesson, he/she will be able to:

OBJECTIVE:

- Describe their perceptions of parental and family responsibilities.

RESOURCES:

- Family Roles and Responsibilities Brainstorming Guide (FD#5)
- Messages From Our Elders Poster
- Newsprint or a Chalkboard/Smartboard

PROCEDURE:

- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to define and examine the term substance abuse.
- Ask students to form Talking Circles. Distribute one brainstorm guide to each group. Remind the messenger that he/she is responsible for completing the guide and reporting to the whole class.
- Ask each group to collectively complete their guide. The messenger records the responses.
- Ask the messengers to present a summary of their group's ideas.
- Ask for a volunteer to record the ideas presented by the messengers on the board or newsprint using a format similar to the format on the brainstorming guide.
- When the combined list is completed, ask the class to discuss the following questions:
 - How do roles and responsibilities change with age? Describe similarities and differences between roles and responsibilities of babies, children, adolescents, adults, and elders.
 - Describe things that women and men can do to ensure that their babies are born healthy. (Not Drinking or Using Other Drugs.)
 - When a family member or members abuse alcohol and/or other drugs, how are family roles and responsibilities changed? Give examples.

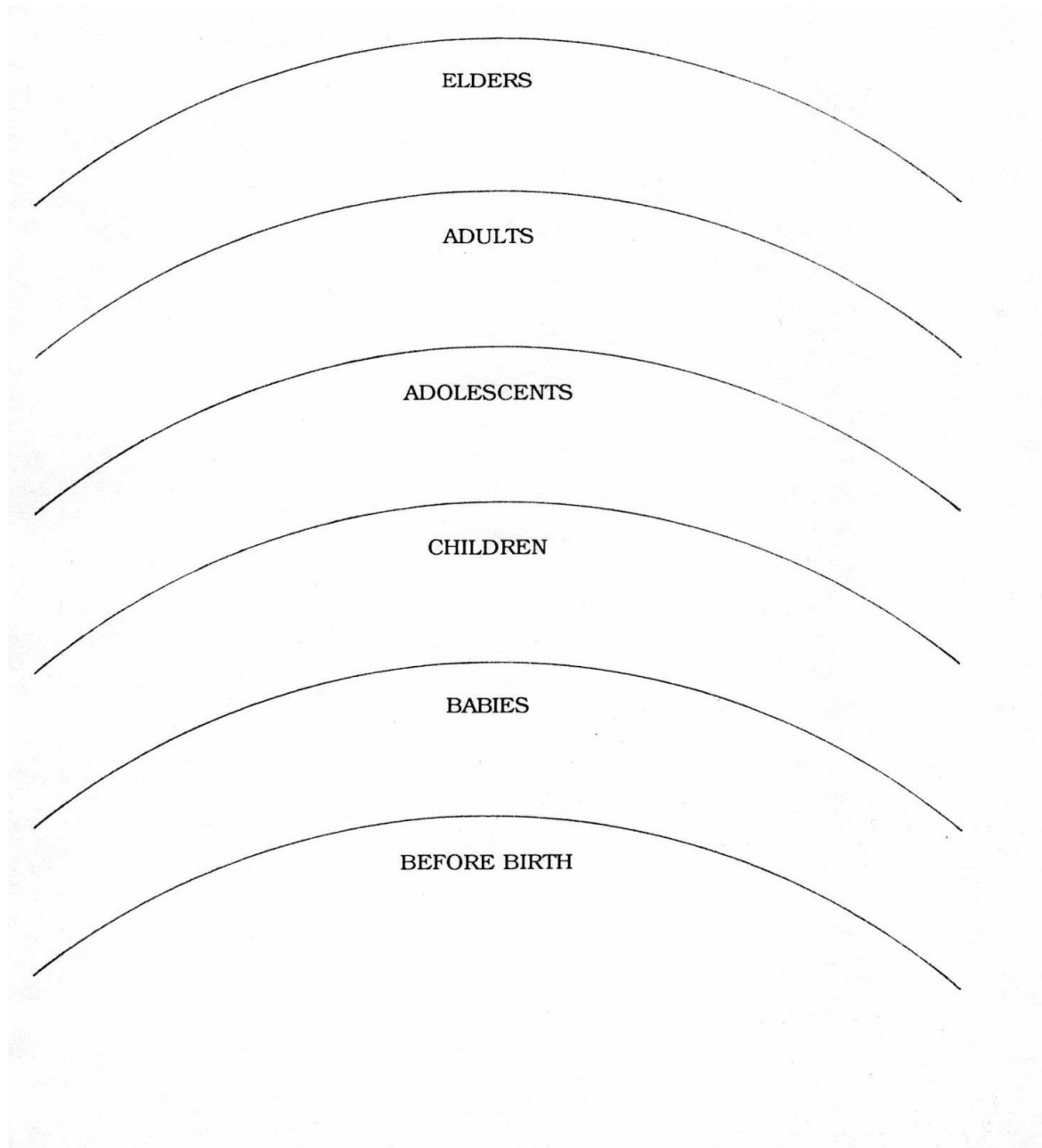
CLOSURE:

Explain that families can be our greatest source of strength and support and can also be a source of pain, especially when the abuse of alcohol and other drugs alters the natural roles and responsibilities that family members assume. Close by reviewing the Messages From Our Elders Poster.

FD#5

FAMILY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Identify the roles and responsibilities that family members of various ages have toward other family members:



MESSAGES FROM OUR ELDERS



“GET HIGH NATURALLY ON LIFE, NOT ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS.”

Say Kaween/Gaawiin (NO) to alcohol and Other Drugs

If a family member or friend becomes dependent on Alcohol or Other Drugs Remember:

- ✓ He/She Can Recover
- ✓ It Isn't Your Fault
- ✓ You Can Learn to Cope And Seek Help For Yourself