SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE

PURPOSE: The purpose of this training module is to provide participant with an opportunity to: examine the impact of substance abuse on the spirituality of the individual, family and community; explore the role spirituality plays in recovery; and examine ways to strengthen local spiritual and cultural support systems.
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The Spiritual Aspects of our Lives; Defining Spirituality
MODULE: Spiritual/Cultural Perspective on Substance Abuse

NAME OF ACTIVITY: The Spiritual Aspects of Our Lives; Defining Spirituality

TIME: 50 Minutes

When participants complete this activity, they will have:

OBJECTIVES:

- Identified spiritual aspects of their lives.
- Developed a consensus definition of spirituality.

RESOURCES:

- What is Spirituality Worksheet
- What is Spirituality Chart
- Flip Chart and markers

PROCEDURE:

- Break group into talking circles with 5 per group.
- Review talking circle rules.
- Distribute one worksheet to each group.
- Ask the talking circles to select a messenger.
- Ask each group to complete the worksheet.
- Re-group and ask each messenger to report the group's discussion.
- Record the talking circle responses on the chart. Consolidate duplicated responses but indicate their frequency.
- Write a consensus definition of spirituality and list the characteristics on the chart. Save this for the next activity.

CLOSURE:

- Explain that during the next session the group will review and discuss similarities between — spirituality and religion, and Christianity and traditional beliefs.
What is Spirituality?
Worksheet

**Purpose**: To assist participants in identifying spiritual aspects of their lives.

**Directions**: Use a group brainstorming process to discuss and record responses to the following questions.

Think of examples of things that you do or believe in that you consider to be “spiritual.”
# What Is Spirituality?

**Chart**

Purpose: To develop a consensus definition of spirituality and identify characteristics of spirituality.

What Is Spirituality? (Consensus definition)

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What Are the Characteristics of Spirituality?

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Examining Similarities and Differences Between Religion and Spirituality, And Christianity And Traditional Beliefs
MODULE: Spiritual/Cultural Perspective on Substance Abuse

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Examining Similarities and Differences Between — Religion and Spirituality, and Christianity and Traditional Beliefs.

TIME: 50 Minutes

When participants complete this activity, they will have:

OBJECTIVES:
- Examined the similarities and differences between religion and spirituality.
- Examined the similarities and differences between Christianity and traditional beliefs.

RESOURCES:
- Comparison of Religion and Spirituality Worksheet
- Comparison of Christianity and Traditional Beliefs Worksheet
- Similarities and Differences Summary Chart
- Flip Chart and markers

PROCEDURE:
- Break group into 'talking circles with 5 per group.
- Review talking circles rules.
- Distribute one of each worksheet to each group.
- Ask the talking circles to select a messenger.
- Ask each group to complete the worksheets one at a time.
- Re-group and ask each messenger to report the group's discussion.
- Record the talking circle responses on the chart. Consolidate duplicated responses but indicate their frequency.
- Facilitate a discussion on the similarities and differences presented.

CLOSURE: Explain that in the next session the group will examine the views of several Native American elders on spirituality.
Comparison of Religion and Spirituality
Worksheet

**Purpose:** To assist in identifying the similarities and differences between religion and spirituality.

**Directions:** Use a group brainstorming process to discuss and record responses to the following questions.

1. What characteristics come to mind when you think of religion and spirituality?

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<th>RELIGION</th>
<th>SPIRITUALITY</th>
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2. List similarities and differences between the two.
   
   How are they alike? How are they different?

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## Comparison of Christianity and Traditional Beliefs

### Worksheet

**Purpose:** To assist participants in identifying the similarities and differences between Christianity and Traditional beliefs.

**Directions:** Use a group brainstorming process to discuss and record responses to the following questions.

1. List characteristics that come to mind when you think of Christianity and traditional beliefs.

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<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Traditional Belief</th>
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2. List similarities and differences between the two.

   **How are they alike?**

   **How are they different?**

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Similarities and Differences Summary Chart

**Purpose**: To consolidate each group’s discussion into a common list of similarities and differences.

1. List the similarities and differences between religion and spirituality.
   - **How are they alike?**
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
   - **How are they different?**
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________

2. List the similarities and differences between Christianity and traditional beliefs.
   - **How are they alike?**
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
   - **How are they different?**
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
     - __________________________________________
Examining Spirituality from a Variety of Perspectives
MODULE: Spiritual/Cultural Perspective on Substance Abuse

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Examining Spirituality from a Variety of Perspectives

TIME: 1 Hour

After participants have completed this activity, they will be able to:

OBJECTIVES:

• Discuss similarities and differences in the views held by Indian people on spirituality.

RESOURCES:

• What is Spirituality? Discussion Guide Worksheet
• What is Spirituality? Discussion Guide Chart
• What is Spirituality Worksheet, from an interview, with Frank Dickenson, pages 1 and 2
• What is Spirituality Chart, from an interview, with Frank Dickenson, pages 1 and 2
• What is Spirituality Worksheet, from an interview, with LeRoy Fairbanks, pages 1 and 2
• What is Spirituality Chart, from an interview, with LeRoy Fairbanks, pages 1 and 2
• What is Spirituality Worksheet, from an interview, with Dee Bainbridge, pages 1 and 2
• What is Spirituality Chart, from an interview, with Dee Bainbridge, pages 1 and 2.
• Local elders as guest speakers.
• Flip Chart and markers

PROCEDURES:

• Explain that the purpose of this activity is to examine and discuss similarities and differences in views held by Native American people on spirituality.
• Break participants into talking circles.
• Review talking circle rules.
• Distribute one copy of the What is Spirituality Narratives Worksheet to each talking circle.
• Distribute one discussion guide worksheet to each circle.
• Ask for a volunteer from each circle to act as messenger. The messenger will record the group's discussion.
• Ask each talking circle messenger to read the narratives to the group. After this is done, discuss each question on the guide, allowing enough time for all participants to have input.
• When the talking circles have completed their guide, re-group. Ask each messenger to report the group's discussion.
• Provide enough time for participants to make additional comments.
**CLOSURE:** Close this activity by discussion using I realized..., I discovered... or I learned... statements.

**OPTIONAL METHOD:** Invite local elders in to discuss their views on spirituality. Facilitate an open discussion.
What is Spirituality?

Discussion Guide Worksheet

Directions: Read and discuss the narratives. The following questions are provided as a discussion starter.

1. Summarize the main points in the narrative.

2. How are the views of these individuals alike? How are they different?

3. How are the views of these individuals similar to the views expressed by the group in activity #1 and #2? How are they different?

4. Additional comments/observations/conclusions.
What is Spirituality?

Discussion Guide Chart

Directions: Read and discuss the narratives. The following questions are provided as a discussion starter.

1. Summarize the main points in the narrative.

2. How are the views of these individuals alike? How are they different?

3. How are the views of these individuals similar to the views expressed by the group in activity #1 and #2? How are they different?

4. Additional comments/observations/conclusions.
The spirituality of Native American people starts in the womb of our mother. When a child comes into this world it is a wonderful gift.

Children should be taught at a very early age that the Creator has put them on this Earth for a reason. Part of their role in life is to find and fulfill this reason. Children should be taught that the land, the water, the trees and all living things are to be respected.

Spirituality is a way of life for Indian people. Once we understand that, it is easier to interpret. The word "spirituality" is limited because it is a term developed by the non-Native. It is difficult to use the English language to express "Indian concepts" or to describe a way of life.

From a Native American point of view, the spirit is your life. We all have a spirit that walks with us all the time. When we die, our spirit continues. We leave this body and it goes back to the Earth. The spirituality we have in our life is what keeps us alive, it's what makes us breathe. It is all we really have.
Over our lifetime our spirit grows if we live a good life. When we come to the end of our life, our spirit has grown strong. That is what spirituality is all about.

From a Native American perspective, in the beginning of the world a spiritual being called Wenabozho gave Indian names to all living things — the water, earth, skies, plants and all the animals. All these living things are spiritual beings. As humans, we are connected to all other spiritual beings.

All living things are to be treated with respect. If we cut down a tree, we put tobacco down as an offering to the living spirit of the tree. When we pick medicine, we offer tobacco. When we pray with the pipe for a greater connection to all life, that is spirituality.

*Frank Dickenson, Lone Eagle, 1990*
I think that spirituality is in all people, really, it just takes a little more for some people to bring it out. It’s a belief that you have, or a belief in a higher power. People have different ways of bringing this belief out. I looked at other, different religions and I went to church and I questioned quite a bit. I can even remember back in school, when I was in high school, they kind of force you to go to church, I went to the Catholic church because it was closer to the lunchroom, you could walk across the street from the church to the lunchroom. It seemed to me that every time I questioned something, I’d be stopped, or told to keep quiet.
I think in spirituality, a person is looking for peace of mind. There are times when you think you have it, but it's not quite there, just out of reach. I know there were times when I was in the service, I could sit back and look at the sea and I'd feel at peace. A short while later the feeling would be gone again.

After I returned from the service to the Leech Lake Reservation, I looked up some of the spiritual people, and talked to them. I talked with a Sioux medicine man, medicine men from Canada, and all over — they all seemed to be saying one thing; to believe in a higher power whether you call that higher power God or the Great Spirit. As I considered this, I could see a parallel with the teachings of the Bible. I could see that there was one person, one spirit, Great Spirit, grandfather, whatever you wished to call it, it’s there, someplace. The belief in this and the respect for other people's beliefs is important.

LeRoy Fairbanks, 1990
The strength of each tribe, village and community is derived from the strength of its members. As everyone becomes stronger, Native America becomes stronger.

Conquering alcohol and substance abuse and all the related problems will restore the spirit of Native America. This must be done if we are to achieve economic and social self-sufficiency.
My spirituality gives me strength and fortitude. It is like an inner source of energy to tap when crisis situations arise. If I did not have spiritual strength, I would not have the courage to handle life's challenge.

I believe our ancestors are with us to an extent to enhance our spirituality. Our communication with nature and animals also enhances our spirituality. Their spirits combine with ours to give us strength.

To maintain one's self-esteem it is imperative to maintain one's spirituality. Kindness, compassion, consideration for others, patience and generosity are all qualities that enrich us spiritually. When we practice these virtues, we fuel our spirituality. A person with spirituality cannot be one who is greedy and unkind.

Our Native American families need spiritual strength to combat the weakness of alcohol. When all members of the family join their efforts spiritually, the strength of one's family encourages the victim to reconsider their fate.

When there is no spiritual effort toward a goal, that goal cannot be reached. The eyes of our soul can recognize the spirituality in others.

Sometimes in an alcoholism program we acquire sponsors and we become very close to these people. Our spirits are compatible, and we gain strength from that communion of souls.

What is Spirituality? Spirituality is an inner strength that each person has, and we depend on our spirituality to deal with our weaknesses. We can nourish our spirits by kindness, generosity and patience. We realize our strengths when we have compassion for our friends, our families and our neighbors.

Certain members of a family have a stronger spirituality than others and the strong spiritual person is like the anchor for other members. When we contend with alcoholism in a family, everyone suffers. The wife suffers because she is deprived of companionship and moral support. The children in alcoholic families suffer because they are embarrassed, and they lose esteem. To nourish our spirituality, we need pride and courage and self-esteem. When, we meet strong spirited people we recognize their spirituality and they have good self-esteem, patience and those qualities we admire.
The strength of each tribe, village, and community is derived from the strength of its members. As each individual becomes stronger, Native America becomes stronger.

Conquering alcohol and substance abuse and all the related problems will restore the spirit of Native America. This must be done if we are to achieve economic and social self-sufficiency.
Identifying the Impact that Substance Abuse Has on The Spirituality of Individuals and Families
MODULE: Spiritual/Cultural Perspective on Substance Abuse

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Identifying the Impact that Substance Abuse has on the Spirituality of Individuals and Families

TIME: 50 Minutes

OBJECTIVES: When participants have completed this activity, they will have:

- Identified the impact of substance abuse on the spirituality of individuals, families and communities.

RESOURCES:

- Identifying the Impact of Substance Abuse Worksheet
- Identifying the Impact of Substance Abuse Chart
- Flip Chart and markers

PROCEDURE:

- Break group into talking circles with 5 per group.
- Review talking circle rules.
- Distribute one worksheet per group.
- Ask the talking circle to select a messenger.
- Ask each group to complete the worksheet.
- Re-group and ask each messenger to report the discussion.
- Record the talking circle responses on the chart. Consolidate duplicated responses but indicate their frequency.
- Facilitate a discussion of the responses. Discuss the impact of substance abuse on the community.

CLOSURE: Explain that in the next session the group will examine the views of several Indian elders on the impact of substance abuse on the spirituality of individuals, families and communities.
IDENTIFYING THE IMPACT OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

WORKSHEET

**PURPOSE:** To assist participants in identifying the impact of substance abuse on the spirituality of individuals and families.

**DIRECTIONS:** Use a group brainstorming process to discuss and record responses to the following questions:

1. List ways in which substance abuse affects the spirituality of individuals. (Draw on your personal experience or observations of others.)

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

2. List ways in which substance abuse affects the spirituality of families. (Draw on your personal experiences of observation of others.)

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________
Identifying the Impact of Substance Abuse Chart

**Purpose:** To consolidate each group’s discussion into a common list.

1. List ways in which substance abuse affects the spirituality of individuals.

2. List ways in which substance abuse affects the spirituality of families.

3. List ways in which substance affects the spirituality of the community.
Examining the Impact that Substance Abuse has on the Spirituality of Individuals, Families, and Communities from a Variety of Perspectives
MODULE: Spiritual/Cultural Perspective on Substance Abuse

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Examining the Impact that Substance Abuse has on the Spirituality of Individuals, Families and Communities from a Variety of Perspectives

TIME: 1 Hour

OBJECTIVES: After participants have completed this activity, they will be able to:

- Discuss similarities and differences in the views held by Native American people on the impact of substance abuse on spirituality.

RESOURCES:

- What Impact Does Substance Abuse Have on Spirituality Discussion Guide Worksheet
- What Impact Does Substance Abuse Have on Spirituality Discussion Guide Chart
- What Happens Spiritually When We Drink Worksheet, pages 1 and 2
- What Happens Spiritually When We Drink Chart, pages 1 and 2
- How Does Drinking Affect the Family and Community Spiritually Worksheet
- How Does Drinking Affect the Family and Community Spiritually Chart
- What Happens Spiritually When A Person Quits Drinking Worksheet
- What Happens Spiritually When A Person Quits Drinking Chart
- Local elders as guest speakers
- Flip Chart and markers

PROCEDURE:

- Explain that the purpose of this activity is to examine and discuss similarities and differences in views held by Native American people on the impact of substance abuse on spirituality.
- Break participants into talking circles.
- Review talking circle rules.
- Distribute one copy of each narrative to each circle.
- Distribute one discussion guide to each circle.
- Ask for a volunteer from each circle to act as messenger. The messenger will record the group's discussion.
- Ask each talking circle messenger to read the narratives to the group. After this is done, discuss each question on the guide, allowing enough time for all participants to have input.
- When the talking circles have completed their guide, re-group. Ask each messenger to report the group's discussion.
- Provide enough time for participants to make additional comments.
CLOSURE:

• Close this activity by discussing, I realized..., I discovered..., I learned..., statements.

OPTIONAL METHOD:

• Invite local elders in to discuss their views on the impact of substance abuse on spirituality. Facilitate an open discussion.
**WHAT IMPACT DOES SUBSTANCE ABUSE HAVE ON SPIRITUALITY DISCUSSION GUIDE WORKSHEET**

**DIRECTIONS**: Read and discuss the narratives. The following questions are provided as a discussion starter.

1. Summarize the main points made in each narrative.

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

2. How are the views of this individual similar to the views expressed by the group in Activity #4 and #5? How are they different?

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

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   ____________________________________________________________

3. Additional comments/observations/conclusions...

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________

   ____________________________________________________________
WHAT IMPACT DOES SUBSTANCE ABUSE HAVE ON SPIRITUALITY DISCUSSION GUIDE
WORKSHEET

DIRECTIONS: Read and discuss the narratives. The following questions are provided as a discussion starter.

1. Summarize the main points made in each narrative.

2. How are the views of this individual similar to the views expressed by the group in Activity #4 and #5? How are they different?

3. Additional comments/observations/conclusions...
According to our traditional teachings, when we're born, we're born with a spiritual gift. We are born with a spirit. We are born pure.

As we grow up in today's world, we face many difficult things. The temptation to drink or use drugs is one of these difficult things.
WHAT HAPPENS SPIRITUALLY WHEN WE DRINK

WORKSHEET

From an Interview with Frank Dickenson

Page 2

Spiritually, when you take that first drink, that spirit you came into the world with is weakened and eventually leaves. When the Indian people take all these things from the non-Native American culture, we weaken our Native ways and our spirits.

When a person's spirit leaves, it gets lost and wanders in the spirit world. In its place we attract all the other negative spirits. That is why we fight with our wives, children, relatives and friends, and sometimes we die when we drink.

We have no spirit.

There was a lady that came to me about 4 years ago. Her brother died from drinking. She asked me if I'd give him an Indian name. I told her I didn't think I could, but I would pray about it and talk to her again in the morning. So, I had a ceremony that night and found out I couldn't help this man. I also talked to an elder about this and he said, "The spirit of this man is gone; you can't call the spirit back; his spirit is lost and will be wandering for a long time." So, that is what happens when we drink. Our spirit leaves us.

The elders say that even the strongest medicine cannot bring a person's spirit back. One elder told me that in his dreams he saw into the next world and saw many lost spirits lingering and longing to go home.
WHAT HAPPENS SPIRITUALLY WHEN WE DRINK

CHART

From an Interview with Frank Dickenson

Page 2

Spiritually, when you take that first drink, that spirit you came into the world with is weakened and eventually leaves. When the Native American people take all these things from the non-Native culture, we weaken our Native ways and our spirits.

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The elders say that even the strongest medicine cannot bring a person's spirit back. One elder told me that in his dreams he saw into the next world and saw many lost spirits lingering and longing to go home.
HOW DOES DRINKING AFFECT THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SPIRITUALLY?

WORKSHEET

From an Interview with Frank Dickenson

When people drink and argue they attract negative feelings to their home. If a house has been blessed and later people drink and argue in that house, the good spirits leave.

In terms of relationships, when one person is drinking it is difficult for the whole family. Family members often enable the person by trying to protect them from the consequences of their behavior.

If one partner drinks and the other is trying to live a spiritual life, it doesn't work. A family must heal itself together or it is a very difficult journey. In terms of the larger community, in some places the spiritual life of the community is almost gone.

So many people have lost their spiritual self that the collective community has also.
When people decide to stop drinking there is a recovery process, they must go through. Many people have a need to find their identity as Indian people; to find their inner self. A good way to begin this search is with a ceremony and feast marking the beginning of your journey.

Once you make this commitment it is a long journey. It is a journey that is taken one step at a time. You may need to get an Indian name as the first step; if you don't have one. An Indian name will help you strengthen your spiritual being. You may also need to fast or receive a pipe to help strengthen your spirit.
Identifying the Role of Spirituality in Recovery from Substance Abuse
MODULE: Spiritual/Cultural Perspective on Substance Abuse

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Identifying the Role of Spirituality in Recovery from Substance Abuse

TIME: 50 Minutes

OBJECTIVES: When participants have completed this activity, they will have:

- Identified the role that spirituality plays in recovery from substance abuse.

RESOURCES:

- Identifying the Role of Spirituality in Recovery Worksheet
- Identifying the role of Spirituality in Recovery Chart
- Flip Chart and markers

PROCEDURE:

- Break group into talking circles with 5 per group.
- Review talking circle rules.
- Distribute one worksheet per group.
- Ask the talking circle to select a messenger.
- Ask each group to complete the worksheet.
- Re-group and ask each messenger to report the discussion.
- Record the talking circle responses on the chart. Consolidate duplicated responses but indicate their frequency.
- Facilitate a discussion of the responses.

CLOSURE:

- Explain that in the next session the group will examine local community spiritual and cultural support systems.
IDENTIFYING THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN RECOVERY

WORKSHEET

PURPOSE: To assist participants in identifying the role that spirituality plays in recovery from substance abuse.

DIRECTIONS: Use a group brainstorming process to discuss and record responses to the following questions:

1. Identify ways in which spirituality plays a role in recovery from substance abuse for individuals. (Draw on your personal experience or observation of others.)

2. List ways in which spirituality plays a role in recovery from substance abuse for families. (Draw on your personal experience or observation of others.)
IDENTIFYING THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY IN RECOVERY

CHART

**PURPOSE:** To assist participants in identifying the role that spirituality plays in recovery from substance abuse.

**DIRECTIONS:** Use a group brainstorming process to discuss and record responses to the following questions:

1. Identify ways in which spirituality plays a role in recovery from substance abuse for individuals. (Draw on your personal experience or observation of others.)

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

2. List ways in which spirituality plays a role in recovery from substance abuse for families. (Draw on your personal experience or observation of others.)

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
EXAMINING THE LOCAL SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS
MODULE: Spiritual/Cultural Perspective on Substance Abuse

NAME OF ACTIVITY: Examining the Local Spiritual and Cultural Support Systems

TIME: 30 Minutes

OBJECTIVES: When participants complete this activity, they will have:

- Examined the local spiritual and cultural support systems.
- Identified other local support systems that are needed.

RESOURCES:

- Examining Local Support Systems Chart
- Flip Chart and markers

PROCEDURE:

- Ask the whole group to participate in this discussion.
- Review talking circle rules.
- Facilitate a discussion of each of the components on the chart and summarize the groups' responses.

CLOSURE:

- If the group wants to develop a plan to develop some of the support systems needed refer them to the Comprehensive Community Planning Module.
EXAMINING LOCAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS CHART

**PURPOSE:** To assist participants in examining the local spiritual and cultural support systems and identify other support systems that are needed.

**DIRECTIONS:** Use a group brainstorming process to discuss and record responses to the following questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDENTIFYING THE LOCAL SPIRITUAL &amp; CULTURAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS</th>
<th>IS THIS MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY?</th>
<th>WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED?</th>
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