

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS LESSON PLAN

COURSE TITLE: American Indian Cultural Awareness.

LESSON TITLE: _____

ASSOCIATED LESSON TITLES: _____ *Note:*

PREPARED BY: Myrna Kuka

DATE: 9/10/08

REVISED BY: Rae Forseth

REVISION DATE: 10/2010

TIME FRAME	PARAMETERS
<u>2</u> HOURS _____ MINUTES	AUDIENCE: All DOC Employees
APPROVAL SIGNATURE(S) Bureau Chief: _____ Legal (if applicable): _____	NUMBER: <u>30</u> SPACE: <u>Classroom</u>

TRAINING GOAL

Develop an understanding of the Native American Culture and create an atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and offenders.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES	EVALUATION TECHNIQUE
Upon completion of this designated training block the student will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List the various tribal nations of Montana and the U.S. • Recognize cultural habits of the American Indian. • Understand religious ceremonies and the meaning of each religious object used in these ceremonies and belief system. 	Group discussion Check comprehension through question and answers

INSTRUCTOR MATERIALS

**REFERENCE DOCUMENTS
REQUIRED ON-HAND**

___ OVERHEADS _____ Through _____

___ SLIDES
TITLE(S) _____

___ POSTERS
TITLE(S) _____

___ COMPUTER DISKETTESX
TITLE(S) _____

___ VIDEO TAPES _____ LENGTH (in minutes)
TITLE(S) _____

___ OTHER (SPECIFY) _____

1. printed handouts
2. herbs and plants

EQUIPMENT / SUPPLIES NEEDED

___ EASEL PAD & STANDS	___ TELEVISION(S)
___ EASEL PAD MARKERS	___ VIDEO SHOW
___ EASEL PADS _____ (# NEEDED)	<u>X</u> LCD PROJECTOR
___ MASKING TAPE	<u>X</u> COMPUTER
___ SLIDE PROJECTOR (CAROUSEL)	___ WHITE BOARD
___ OVERHEAD PROJECTOR	___ WHITE BOARD MARKERS/ERASER
___ PROJECTOR SCREEN	___ TRANSPARENCY MARKERS
___ VIDEOTAPE PLAYER	___ OTHER (SPECIFY)
___ VIDEO CAMERA	

("X" is required equipment, "O" is optional equipment. Input number, if necessary)

STUDENT HANDOUTS

# NEEDED	TITLE
• 30	• American Indian Culture Awareness

METHODS / TECHNIQUES

- Lecture
- Group Discussion

REFERENCES

The following books and other materials are used as a basis for this lesson plan. The instructor should be familiar with the material in these reference documents to effectively teach this module.

TITLE

- Indian Education for All
- Manual of Native American Religious Practices in Secure Confinement
- Montana Department of Corrections Data

AUTHOR

- Montana Office of Public Instruction 1-2007
- National Institute of Corrections 1994
- Montana Department of Corrections

GENERAL COMMENTS

In preparing to teach this material, the instructor should take into consideration the following comments or suggestions.

- This course is designed to assist in the understanding of the Native American Culture, their beliefs and family dynamics, as well generate conversation in regards to security issues. Be aware that some conflict may occur due to what the offender believes and what security will allow.

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<p>The purpose of the class is to provide basic information about the religious practices of the Native American Indian inmate</p> <p>Our goals are to help you develop an understanding of the Native American Culture and create an atmosphere of mutual respect between staff and offenders. And our objectives, how we will accomplish this is by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List the various tribal nations of Montana and the U.S. • Recognize cultural habits of the American Indian. • Understand religious ceremonies and the meaning of each religious object used in these ceremonies and belief system. <p><u>Large Group Discussion</u></p> <p>So why is it important to you? Why is it important to the department?</p> <p>Possible responses should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding/Acceptance • Ensure no security violations happen <p>The Indian offender reflects the worst of all social conditions affecting American Society today; he or she comes from an ethnic group who have the highest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • suicide rate among teenagers • adult arrest rate • criminal conviction rate • alcohol related crimes • rate of assault-related crimes • disproportionate sentencing rate • inmate suicide rate in many states • offender recidivism rate • economic poverty rates on and off reservations • high school dropout rate • alcohol related abuse, medical conditions, and death rates. • single female heads-of-households with minor children <p>As well as having the least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amount of federal and state funding for alternatives to 	

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	<p>detention on reservations and in urban areas;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amount of federal and state funding for juvenile and adult inmate rehabilitation programs; • effective legal resources available for representation • number of Indian personnel in state and federal jails and prisons in proportion to state and inmate populations. <p>There are 562 federally recognized tribes in the U.S.; each has their creation stories, beliefs, customs, values and ways. The problem we run into is that most incarcerated Indians have limited educational backgrounds, and most understand little or nothing about the Criminal Justice System.</p> <p>Add to this these cultural issues Most Indians have a culturally developed fear of public speaking or talking to people they don't know.</p> <p>Due to their ethnic background Indian inmates will mostly look down or away from authoritative people when speaking to them.</p> <p>American Indians use humor to relieve tension and stress. This can sometimes become misconstrued or misinterpreted.</p> <p>Many Indian inmates have experienced or suffer from a number of debilitating effects from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (FAS) Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, • (FAE) Fetal Alcohol Effect, • (RAD) Reactive Attachment Disorder • (ADD) Attention Deficit Disorder, • (ADHD) Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, and other co-occurring disorders including • PTSD-Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, • Physical, Mental or Sexual abuse throughout their lives. <p>Now apply it to the criminal justice field. Do you now see the responsibility we have in providing this class?</p> <p>That's an overview of the nation. Let's look closer at Montana and how it affects us.</p>	

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TRIBAL NATIONS

Montana is home to seven Indian Reservations

- Blackfoot
- Crow
- Flathead
- Ft. Belknap
- Ft. Peck
- Northern Cheyenne
- Rocky Boy

The state recognizes eight tribal governments which would then include the Little Shell outside of Great Falls, which is a state recognized tribe but not federally recognized.

There are 11 tribes in Montana

- Blackfoot (Blackfoot)
- Crow (Crow)
- Salish, Kootenai & Pend d' Orielle (Flathead)
- Assiniboine & Gros Ventre (Fort Belknap)
- Assiniboine & Sioux (Fort Peck)
- Chippewa (Little Shell)
- Northern Cheyenne (Northern Cheyenne)
- Chippewa-Cree (Rocky Boy)

Incarcerated Indians constitute a disproportionate percentage of the total inmate population when compared to the American Indian Population percentage within the state of Montana (10% of state population) 18% make up male inmate population and 23.4% make up female inmate population. In the youth system there is an even greater disproportionate seen.

So as you can see with this many diverse groups there will some difference in regards to ceremonies, practices and beliefs but for today this class we want to help you with a "basic" understanding or an overview and you can take from it what you need and then apply it to your specific agency/facility.

You will also note that with all the ceremonies and practices and beliefs, there is a deep rooted connection with nature. Perhaps the most precious gift that American Indians, that practice

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traditional ways, have to share with others is their perspective on the interrelatedness of all creation and our deep sense of relationship to the land in particular. We are relatives; from buffaloes and eagles to trees and rocks, mountains and lakes”.

CEREMONIES

- Sweat Lodge
- Smudging
- Sacred Circle / Medicine Wheel
- Pow Wow

Sweat Lodge Procedures: The beliefs and practices connected to the sweat are:

- One in nature
- Harmony with other beings of nature
- Length of sweat, as well as the style and design of the lodge varies from tribe to tribe
- The ground is considered consecrated
- The pipe and objects are smudged before ceremony
- The lodge is a religious service that worships all things living on Mother Earth

Purpose: This is a ceremony of purification and is a powerful experience that helps participants to learn, grow; heal, and be cleansed. The Lodge represents a womb where participants enter to return for ritual purification, strength, and guidance, and for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual healing. The participants offer their suffering, songs, and prayers for those who are sick, those who need help (including themselves), and for all creation.

Description of the Ceremony: At least half a day, if not an entire day, before the ceremony the participants should fast. All planning to participate must be present to prepare the ceremonial grounds. In higher custody units where inmates are permitted to use the Lodge only one inmate at a time, the first one is expected to make the fire and prepare the grounds with the subsequent participants keeping the fire going until the last participant who is expected to close the area properly. The ceremony begins

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when the fire is lit. While the rocks are heating, which usually take 1 to 2 hours, the participants help with the general maintenance of the area, cutting firewood, hauling water, and making tobacco ties. NO loud talking, cursing, card or game playing, and eating is permitted. When the rocks are thoroughly heated, the participants enter the Lodge with their tobacco ties (if used, these are small pieces of colored cloth wrapped around a pinch of tobacco and connected with string -- they possess much symbolic and ritual meaning). The rocks are passed in by the Fire Keeper.

Sometimes the Fire Keeper remains outside the Lodge while at other times he or she also enters the Lodge. The Fire Keeper then closes the door and a round begins. Four rounds of 30 to 45 minutes take place with 5 to 15 minute intervals where the door is opened so the Fire Keeper may attend the fire and bring in more rocks. After the fourth round the participants leave the Lodge, shake each other's hands, place their tobacco ties in the fire pit, then quietly cool off with water and air. After 15 to 30 minutes a ritual sharing of food takes place. Then a circle is formed and a closing prayer offered.

Items used in the Sweat

- Lava rocks are preferred, around 30
- Wood
- Willows
- Tools-shovel, pitchfork, dipper, bucket, water, canvas, sweetgrass, sacred pipe, tobacco, cedar, forked stick.

Time Required: At least four (4) hours up to eight (8).

Frequency: Can vary but ideally once per week.

The Smudging Ceremony

We are taught before a person can be healed or heal another, they must be cleansed or any bad feelings, negative thoughts, bad spirits, or negative energy.

3 plants most widely used are:

- Sage
- Cedar

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- Sweet Grass

Sage (from Latin word Salvare, meaning to heal). Plains Indians place sage on the floor of the sweat lodge to cleanse and use to rub on body while in sweat.

Cedar-burned for purification, not unlike sage

Sweet grass-brings in good spirits drives out negative influences

The clippings are burned and the smoke rubbed onto the hands, then gathers the smoke to your body, allow smoke to carry negativity away. Another person can smudge you also and an eagle feather may be used.

Sacred Circle/Medicine Wheel

Sacred Circle-the symbol is sacred to Indians. Prayers are offered in a circle. Indian ceremonies are done in a circle. Indians dance in a circle at their celebrations. Some homes originally were in a circle (teepees). The circle represents the sacred hoop of the whole world, demonstrating the unity of all creation and meaning. The circle and the four directions are often brought together in what is called the Medicine Wheel.

The Four Directions

The four directions are significant

- East-(Yellow)is the location of the spirit of enlightenment, guidance and direction
- South-(Black) is the place of the spirit of growth, particularly after winter
- West-(Red)the doorway one goes through when leaving this world and returning to the spirit world
- North-(White)the location of the spirit of healing and reconciliation

Now realize that the colors may vary from tribe to tribe, some will not have black listed, instead it may be blue or green.

Pow Wow

The Pow-wow is a day of traditional dancing, singing, speaking,

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and praying in word, song, food, and music in honor and appreciation for all that lives. A feast of traditional, familiar (such as fry bread, corn, pemmican, and buffalo meat) as seen as essentials for the gathering. The Pow-wow is not a celebration or party rather, it is a ceremony.

ARTICLES

The following objects are commonly used in group and private worship services.

- Medicine Bags
- Sacred Herbs / Tobacco
- Sacred Pipe
- Feathers
- Hair / Headbands
- Drum
- Rattles

Medicine Bag: Traditionally, many American Indians carry, wear, and maintain a medicine bag. The medicine bag may contain such natural objects as stones, animal parts, or herbs. It represents an extremely personal relationship between the Creator and the wearer. Usually a medicine bag is 2" to 6" square or rectangle, made of leather, and is worn about the neck or kept in one's personal possessions. In custody units where inmates are permitted to wear or carry religious medallions, medicine bags should be considered as a medallion and be permitted. In lockdown and suicide watch cells where usually no medallions are permitted, medicine bags should be made accessible to the Indian inmate on a scheduled basis, in a safe setting, and in the same manner that other religious paraphernalia for practitioners of any faith are made available (i.e., medallions, holy books, etc.). In the jail and prison setting care should be taken to ensure that the Indian inmate's spiritual beliefs related to the medicine bag are not violated. In search procedures, staff should ask the Indian inmate to open their medicine bag for visual inspection. The Chaplain should be present at all inspections. Neither the bag nor its contents should be touched by staff. Some bags are not meant to be opened and they are sewn shut others while others have a drawstring, pouch opening. Look for tampering or alterations. If noted that it has been

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<p>opened, the item can then be confiscated as it is now being used for something other than what it was intended for. It would lose its religious / sacred classification and now be listed as contraband.</p> <p><u>Sacred Herbs:</u> The burning of sacred herbs is a widespread daily practice for those who are deeply involved in Indian spirituality. The four most sacred plants common to most tribes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sage • cedar • sweet grass • tobacco <p>These herbs are burned in small portions, usually within a sea shell or small non-metal bowl.</p> <p><u>Ceremonial Tobacco</u> is smoked in a ceremonial pipe as a means of communication with the spirit asking for assistance and wisdom. Medicinal tobacco leaves fried in butter promote the healing wounds. Wads of tobacco inside tooth cavities, eases pain. Indians cured headaches, dysentery, and treated rheumatism with tobacco. Soothes over excitement of the nervous system, assists in removal of secretions from any air passages, and promotes vomiting.</p> <p><u>Tobacco Ties:</u> Tobacco ties are small colored pieces of cloth (1" to 3" square) tied together on a string (1" to 2" long) containing tobacco. They symbolize the gathering and sending of prayers. They can be made in the Sweat Lodge Ceremony and in private prayers. After the ceremony they are burned, thus, representing the sending of prayers. They are similar to the Catholic use of vigil candles.</p> <p>In the secure confinement setting it is important that staff familiarize themselves with the aroma and appearance of these herbs as to not confuse them with marijuana. Indian inmates wishing to burn these in personal worship should be informed of appropriate areas which are not smoke-free zones (including exercise cages in lockdown units), while at the same time they should be afforded privacy as to not arouse the interference of other inmates and staff.</p>	

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Sacred Pipe: The Sacred Pipe is the cornerstone of the spiritual teachings of most Indian tribes. A high degree of reverence is given the Sacred Pipe. Security staff needs to accord the Pipe the same respect they would give to the Christian Eucharist and Bible, the Muslim Qur'an, and the Jewish Torah. In secure confinement the Pipe is used by Indian inmates in group and individual worship.

Long Hair

Long Hair: In the vast majority of Indian cultures, the wearing of one's hair in a long, uncut, and trimmed fashion, represents a connection to the Spirit World. The hair symbolizes a path from the human form to the spirit form. The traditional hair styles which can reasonably be accommodated in secure confinement include a pony tail, two braids, one braid, and loose under a headband. You may see someone cut their hair as a sign of mourning.

Headbands: The headband for the American Indian has a significant role in all traditions. The headband completes and signifies the Circle for the wearer. It is believed to maintain oneness with order, conveying clear and respectful thinking. The headband may be worn everyday or on special occasions.

Significantly some tribes intentionally do not wear headbands during times of war and battle because these are times of disorder.

Headband colors have universal meanings of symbolic significance; with the six primary colors being:

- Blue-Sky or deity
- Red-Power or strength
- Green-Mother Earth
- White-Purity
- Yellow-Corn pollen road
- Black-darkness or infinity

Feathers

Feathers-the eagle represents power, strength, healing and

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loyalty for the Indian.

The eagle feather is considered sacred and should not be purchased for personal possession. It should only be awarded or given to another.

Drum

The drum is seen as the heartbeat of both the earth and Indian Nation. It brings the Indian people together in a Sacred Circle and reunites all in spirit and purpose. The drum is believed to reconnect the Indian the earth and through it, the Indian sends forth prayers. There is often one drum used for healing sweats and a large drum for other ceremonies.

Rattles

In healing ceremonies, rattles are shaken to call the spirit of life which takes care of human beings. It may also be used during the Sweat Lodge Ceremony when the elder invites the spirits of the four directions to come in and help the participants who are seeking a spiritual and physical cleansing in order to start a new life.

CULTURAL ISSUES

The culture is part of the entire being. We started this class looking at the cultural issues within corrections but now I would ask that we take a closer look at the person – not the offender. To look at the entire being.

There are several mechanisms that are practiced which are not accepted in mainstream society.

Matriarchal family dynamics – Practices specific to women

This is seen as the mother being the head of house. Women were viewed as sacred, the life bringers. A womens menstrual cycle is scared and they would not participate in ceremonies during this time. A man would use the sweat to cleanse and the woman has her menstrual cycle to cleanse. This is sometimes called her “moon” time. It is thought that at this time she is closer to the universe and is most powerful.

Body language

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At times this may be confusing for some. Main stream society may view the stance and demeanor as weak or shy. They tend to approach things in a more relaxed and thoughtful manner and some may see this as uncaring or not being actively involved. But for the Native American Indian culture it is common to watch, listen, think then act. This takes time and they need that to process the information before they have their input or involvement.

Direct eye contact

Avoiding direct eye contact was seen as a sign of respect and is considered to be less threatening or challenging. With some of the younger population – this may not hold as true today as it once did.

Respect for the wisdom of elders.

The respect for the wisdom and knowledge is highly regarded within the Native culture. The Elders are the individuals that have learned, lived life, earned a higher status and now share their experience with others and are given the final say in important tribal matters. You may note a rise in elder abuse by gang members as this is becoming a loyalty initiation process.

Concept of the family to embrace the whole village.

Extended family ties are extremely close. It is common for individuals to view others who are not “blood relatives” as aunts, uncles, or even grandparents.

Giveaways

This is sometimes done in honor of family members that have passed away within the last year. The items are blankets, household articles of all kinds. The family members who sponsor the giveaway gather items the whole year. This is to show the person who has passed away continues to give to others. It is done at various times as a means to provide thanks, share resources with others or as a part of the celebration.

Closure

With what we have learned so far, you can now see that the Native American Indian Inmate has a different perspective in regards to their beliefs, families and interactions. Also

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remember that it varies from tribe to tribe and now from tradition to new ways. Hopefully with this awareness there is a mutual respect born and we can work together to ensure a safe environment.