Tribal Child Welfare Leadership Academy

Train the Trainer

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# Adult Learning Principles

Adult learners find themselves in learning environments for myriad reasons. They may want to learn a new skill to further their careers, or maybe their supervisor enrolled them into mandatory training. They could be full of curiosity or dread as they enter the classroom, with their past learning experiences, workloads, and family lives entwined with what is set before them.

Adult learning best practices have been discussed for decades, with leading theorists believing that adult learners need key conditions for learning to be successful, including:

* Motivation to learn
* Autonomy and ownership over learning
* Connection between learning and roles and responsibilities
* Problem-centered learning

If you are interested in finding out more about adult learning and how you can incorporate these principles into your work, these resources can guide your understanding:

Knowles, M. S. (1968). *Andragogy, not pedagogy*. 1968.

O’Neill, E. (n.d.). “What is Adult Learning Theory?” LearnUpon Blog. Available at <https://www.learnupon.com/blog/adult-learning-theory/>

Mu, F., & Hatch, J. E. (2023). *Adult Learning and Decision Making: An Integrated Theory*.

# Native American Pedagogies

Each tribe is unique in their practices and beliefs, which means that there is no global standard approach for training tribal child welfare staff. While developing this training, we researched Native American learning preferences and incorporated the findings in our curriculum, including storytelling, experiential learning, and connections to culture and community.

If you want to learn more about best practices in developing engaging trainings for Native American audiences, please visit these websites:

Phillips Indian Educators. (n.d.). “Best Practices of Indigenous Pedagogy.” Available at <https://www.pieducators.com/best-practices-indigenous-pedagogy>

Smoker Broaddus, M. (November 2018). “Ways to Become More Culturally Responsive in Engaging American Indian and Alaska Native Families.” Education Northwest. Available at <https://educationnorthwest.org/insights/ways-become-more-culturally-responsive-engaging-american-indian-and-alaska-native-families>

University of Denver. (n.d.). “Native American Pedagogies.” Available at <https://operations.du.edu/inclusive-teaching/native-american-pedagogies>

# Indigenous Worldview

Tribal cultures are largely centered in a relational worldview, one which is nonlinear and sees the land, environment, animals, food, and the like as woven into our existence, intertwined with our life stories. This is in contrast to the western worldview, which tends to seek control over plants, animals, and land and see time and relationships as linear.

To find out more about the Indigenous, or Relational, Worldview, you can review these resources:

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (January 26, 2016). “Indigenous Worldviews vs Western Worldviews.” <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-worldviews-vs-western-worldviews>

Tribal Trade. (n.d.). “Indigenous Worldview (what is it, and how is it different?).”Tribal Trade. <https://us.tribaltradeco.com/blogs/teachings/indigenous-worldview-what-is-it-and-how-is-it-different>

Zakrzewski, Vicki. (November 23, 2022). “Can the Indigenous Worldview Build a Better Future?” *Greater Good Magazine*. <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/can_the_indigenous_worldview_build_a_better_future>

# Training Foundation

This curriculum is the collaborative effort of many individuals and agencies working together to create the Tribal Child Welfare Leadership Academy training, an adaptation of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute’s Leadership Academy for Middle Managers. Over several years, the Center team worked with tribal child welfare leaders, university scholars, tribal community members, and elders to develop an Indigenous-led curriculum that was founded upon a multitude of cultures, histories, and beliefs. The stories that are told throughout this training come from tribal leaders from across the country, and we hope that they will provide examples of hope and inspiration. With gratitude, we acknowledge the many tribal leaders, formal, informal, and hereditary, who provided input and guidance to the process and outcome.

# Preparing for Training

This learning experience incorporates a multitude of modalities, from videos to group work, reflection to teach backs, which allows learners to engage with the materials in a way that builds community and a unified approach to practice and process. With this in mind, it is important to review all the full curriculum, including watching the videos and external links, before the training experience begins.

Some links to review:

* Liberating structures: <https://www.liberatingstructures.com/>
* Indigenous Circles of Leading Video: <https://youtu.be/NXDceVVE56I>
* Intergenerational Protective Circles of Care Video: <https://youtu.be/p0d4R3fIozU>

# Adaptations

## Virtual vs In-Person

The leadership training can be conducted in person or virtually, with the group activities being conducted via virtual breakout rooms. We have found that online deliveries help to provide equitable access to training, especially for small tribes with no travel budgets. When conducting virtual trainings, we have found that the training works best when participants:

* Are provided hourly breaks
* Have protected time away from work responsibilities and can focus on the training
* Are encouraged by their leadership to interact with their cameras on to help with relationship building and minimize multitasking
* Can have a camera and microphone for engagement and breakout activities

In-person training can successfully occur with four full days of training. We suggest that participants be provided breakfast, lunch, and snacks, and that the training take place at a location away from office spaces so that they can be protected from interruptions. Participants thrive in the training when they:

* Have support from leadership to protect their training time
* Are able to participate as a full team
* Have psychological safety so that they can speak candidly about their work experiences

Overall, the training can provide leadership training skills to tribal child welfare staff in a virtual, in-person, or hybrid environment, which means that you can adapt the training to be delivered in the way that is best for the community you serve.

## Cultural Adaptations

While there are specific cultural practices and beliefs woven into the training experience, tribal programs are encouraged to adapt the curriculum to fit their own culture, customs, and beliefs. As noted above, adult learners will be more engaged in a training that relates to their own everyday life, which includes their culture.

Pay particular attention to the Facilitator’s Notes throughout the curriculum for opportunities to customize the content to your particular audience.

# Add-ons (Optional)

## Virtual or In-Person Peer Groups

Facilitated peer groups are a great way to reinforce new learning. The peer group can be topic specific or left up to the group to decide what they would like to learn more about or to discuss with others to reinforce new concepts. Peer groups typically run 6-8 weeks meeting once or twice a month, depending on the participant availability.

## Virtual or In-Person Coaching

Coaching is another optional opportunity for new leaders to work on skills or develop leadership goals they may want to integrate into their day-to-day management style. Generally, a trained professional coach works together with the coachee to clarify values and receives support for 3–9 months, meeting once or twice a month.