Engaging Native Elders and CHRs: 
*Talking Circles in Community-based Diabetes Education*

National Resource Center for Native American Aging (NRCNAA)
Administration on Aging (AOA)
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UND Nursing Center
*With Special Thanks to CHR Programs of the Northern Plains*

Long-term Goals for the Project

- To promote diabetes awareness and education in Tribal Nations through community-based diabetes prevention education
- To tap into existing strengths of native elders and Community Health Representative Programs (CHR) as leaders in community-based prevention and education
Short-term Goals for the Project

- Build partnerships for diabetes prevention among:
  - Native elders
  - CHRs
  - I.H.S. professionals
  - Tribal health personnel
  - Traditional leaders
  - Community members
  - NRCNAA / AOA
  - UND Nursing Center

Objectives of the Project

- Make a culturally competent “translation” of new findings in diabetes research available to communities

- Empower people with knowledge at the “grass roots” level who live and work with diabetes “day to day”

- Develop an educational format that effectively links with existing community and cultural strengths
“Fits” with Goals of the *Steps to a HealthierUS*™ Initiative

- Recent Health and Human Services initiative launched to control chronic diseases, especially:
  - Diabetes
  - Asthma
  - Obesity

Building “Healthy Communities”™ through Empowerment is an Important Goal

“*Individuals have the power to protect their health, and prevention is the key.*”

(HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, 2002)
Talking Circle Education Project: A Good “First Step”…

- Focus fits with *Steps to a Healthier US*

  For example:
  - training to “empower patients to manage their chronic conditions effectively”
  - “new and innovative partnerships among federal, state, local, and tribal governments and communities”
  - “communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions on health”

Why Awareness and Prevention Education for Diabetes?

- Today’s Situation

  - Prevention of type 2 diabetes mellitus urgently needs special attention at the national level

  - Diabetes has nearly doubled in the past decade, now approaching 17 million
Burden of Diabetes

- **Significant personal costs!**
  - Complications are disabling
  - Costs of personal pain, suffering, disability, and impact on family members are not even measurable…

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Burden of Diabetes

- **High financial costs!**
  - Estimated $132 billion spent on diabetes care in the U.S. in 2002.⁴
  
  “Health care spending in 2002 for people with diabetes is more than double what spending would be without diabetes.”⁶ (ADA, p. 917)
Healthy People 2010
Goals for the Next Generation

- Reduce Incidence of Diabetes
- Reduce Risk for Complications
- Reduce Health Disparities

Translating Research into a HealthierUS…

- Emerging research findings in diabetes prevention is very encouraging!
The People Need the *Power* of Knowing…

- Diabetes complications can be prevented\(^{14}\)
- Type 2 diabetes is *preventable!*\(^{15}\)

Engaging Native Elders and CHRs

*Talking Circles in Community-based Diabetes Education*

- A Northern Plains “Step” towards …
  - Building Capacity for Community-based Awareness, Education & Prevention for Diabetes
Engaging Native Elders and Community Health Representatives in the Creation of Healthy Communities: An Adapted Talking Circles Model for Diabetes Prevention Education

**PURPOSES OF TALKING CIRCLE PROJECT**

- Create an innovative format for delivery of diabetes prevention education that is:
  - Culturally relevant
  - Community-based
  - Assets-oriented

**ACADEMICS**
- “Partners”
  - NRCNAA / AOA
  - UND Nursing Center
  - Resource Provision

**COMMUNITY SHAREHOLDERS**
- BIS Professionals
- Tribal Health Personnel
- Tribal Government Leadership
- Interested Community Members

**COMMUNITY HEALTH REPRESENTATIVES**
- “Vital Links”
  - Education
  - Health Promotion
  - Disease Prevention
  - Advocacy for Elderly

**TRIBAL ELDERS**
- “Respected Leaders”
- Health beliefs
- Historical Wisdom
- Guardians for Future Generations

**THE TALKING CIRCLE**
- Empowerment
- Capacity-Building
- Translation of research into community action
- Lessons Learned
*Adapted Talking Circle Format

- Why the Talking Circle Model?
  - Provides opportunities for individuals both to speak and to listen to the wisdom of the entire group of participants
  - Drawn from an oral tradition approach for communication\(^\text{18}\)
  - Has been used effectively in diabetes education in smaller support group settings\(^\text{18}\)

Next Steps…

- Use the “cross-pollination” of medical and cultural knowledge that was shared to plan future community-based diabetes prevention programming
More Next Steps…

- Discuss building the evaluation component for future workshops with Tribal leadership
  - Work collaboratively on an evaluation plan for future workshops and the impact on community diabetes prevention

Helpful Website Links

- http://www.ihs.gov/medicalPrograms/diabetes/NDPreferences.asp
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Reference List

References


References (continued)


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