



American Indian
Cancer Foundation®

Reclaiming Indigenous Food Relationships: Improving Health with Culture



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Overview:

- AICAF Story & Background
- Framework Guide
- Framework Activity
- Additional Resources

The AICAF Story

American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF) is a national non-profit established to address tremendous cancer inequities faced by American Indian and Alaska Natives.



Mission:

To eliminate cancer burdens on American Indian and Alaska Native people through education and improved access to prevention, early detection, treatment and survivor support.

AICAF Strategic Focus

AICAF FOCUSES ITS EFFORTS IN THREE STRATEGIC AREAS:

Bring Attention to American Indian Cancer Burdens and Solutions

- ▶ Champion collaborations and partnerships that leverage community interest, resources, and investments
- ▶ Engage tribes and mainstream health organizations through presentations, exhibits, media and social media
- ▶ Host fundraiser and awareness events across Indian Country

Advance Capacity through Training, Technical Assistance and Resources

- ▶ Identify prevention and healing approaches based on tribal teachings, sovereignty and self-determination
- ▶ Develop and share model frameworks, training and resources for American Indian communities and health systems
 - ▶ Community education and outreach
 - ▶ Clinical systems innovations
 - ▶ Survivor support

Increase Availability of Reliable American Indian Cancer Data and Solutions

- ▶ Host community conversations to identify cancer priorities, barriers and solutions
- ▶ Collaborate to plan reality and community-based research
- ▶ Support evaluation of cancer prevention and screening efforts
- ▶ Develop and share relevant reports and presentations

Prevention & Policy

Technical Assistance Support Staff

What the team does:

- ❖ Supports positive community change
 - Assists in efforts such as: community engagement, focused conversations, action planning, event planning, coalition building
 - Onsite and in person training, as well as distance support (web-based)

Tools and Resources :

- ❖ PSE Infographics tailored to tribal communities
- ❖ Infographics on prevention topics (HPV, breastfeeding as cancer prevention, breast screening, cervical cancer screening)
- ❖ Event planning template
- ❖ Policy examples
- ❖ Public health data, making the case
- ❖ Strategic plan development, report generation

Opportunities for Partnership with Tribal Communities: Technical Assistance & Support

Policy, System & Environmental Change T.A.

- ❖ PSE change 101 training
- ❖ Facilitate community conversations to identify PSE change strategies & solutions

Strategic Planning Facilitation

- ❖ Community visioning
- ❖ Health & wellness prioritizing
- ❖ Action planning
- ❖ Calendar creation

Tribal Policy Development & Implementation Assistance

- ❖ Policy drafting workshop/policy template creation
- ❖ Policy development and review
- ❖ Connecting to legal aid for policy, ordinance and resolution drafting
- ❖ Presenting tribal policy drafts to Tribal Council



Opportunities of Partnership with Tribal Communities: Technical Assistance & Support

- ❖ **Presentations, education and resources on cancer prevention**
- ❖ **Making the case for change**
 - Providing fact-based data and information on health, prevention and wellness
 - Survey development for community input
- ❖ **Grant reviewing to assist with the sustainability of initiatives**
- ❖ **Ongoing and available support in coalition building**
 - Assistance with the development of coalitions
 - Resources to help keep coalitions engaged
 - Trainings
- ❖ **Community engagement strategy development**
 - Event planning for creating community buy-in



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Background



Indigenous Worldview

*an understanding of
the world*



Root Causes of Chronic Disease



Adverse Social Determinants of Health

- **Historical & Intergenerational Trauma:** colonization, genocide, stress, disruption of childhood development
- **Poor Access To:** healthy foods, health & human services, employment, education, transportation

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- **Household Dysfunction:** divorce/separation, alcohol abuse, drug use, incarceration, mental illness, domestic violence
- **Abuse:** physical, sexual, verbal, emotional
- **Neglect:** physical, emotional

Behavioral Risk Factors

- **Behavior:** lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating & commercial tobacco use
- **Addiction:** commercial tobacco, alcoholism, drug use, unsafe sex

Poor Health Outcomes

- **Mental Health:** depression, post traumatic stress disorder, suicide
- **Physical Health:** cancer, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, sexually transmitted diseases, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, HIV, Hep C, cirrhosis

Early Death



Going Upstream to Achieve Health Equity



Health Equity

Achieving full health potential

Balanced Health



- **Physical:** exercise, eat nutritious meals, get adequate sleep, avoid alcohol and processed foods
- **Mental:** practice mindfulness, seek help when needed, learn how to manage stress, maintain a healthy work and life balance
- **Emotional:** build healthy relationships, value yourself, stay connected with your community, express gratitude
- **Spiritual:** participate in ceremonies, offer prayers, learn your language, connect with elders

Breaking the Cycle of Trauma



- **Protective Factors:** cultural connection, belonging, resilience, safety, healthy coping skills
- **Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences:** nurturing stable relationships, culturally tailored family education, breastfeeding, connecting families to community system resources

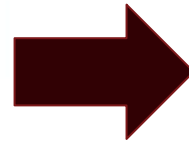
Social Determinants of Health



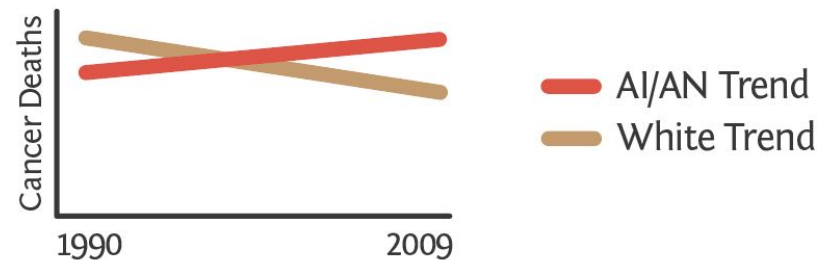
- **Social and Economical:** supportive government, financial institutions, safe transportation routes, cultural activities
- **Increased Access to:** healthy foods, safe physical activity spaces, sacred medicines, health care, education, housing, modes of transportation, internet

Inequities: American Indian Cancer Data

American Indians face alarming inequities in cancer incidence and mortality.



Cancer death rates for AI/AN increased over a 20 year span, while decreasing for Whites over the same time frame.



Other populations have celebrated decreasing cancer mortality rates in the past 20 years, but American Indian cancer mortality rates are still on the rise.

Revitalizing Indigenous Food & Culture

- Historical trauma impacted Indigenous food ways
- Prior to colonization, our communities were healthy and thriving.



Cultural Wisdom Declaration

“to ensure that cultural wisdom and traditional practices are taken into account and supported as fundamental elements of programs, policies, and activities that are designed, or contribute, to improvements in behavioral health.”

- National Behavioral Health Agenda, December 2016

Review of Existing Data and Resources

- Literature review - reviewed 60+ publications
- Synthesized existing AICAF data and reports
- Funding snapshot for AI health in the region

Contributing Partners

AI Food and Cultural Experts:

- Dream of Wild Health
- Inter-Tribal Epi Center
- Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Health Board
- Little Earth Urban Farms
- Lower Sioux Indian Community
- Native Food Perspectives



HEALTHY FOODS,
HEALTHY LIVES INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Academic Partners:

- Fond du Lac Tribal Community College
- North Dakota State University
- University of Arkansas
- University of Minnesota

Health Organizations:

- Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention
- Minnesota Department of Health



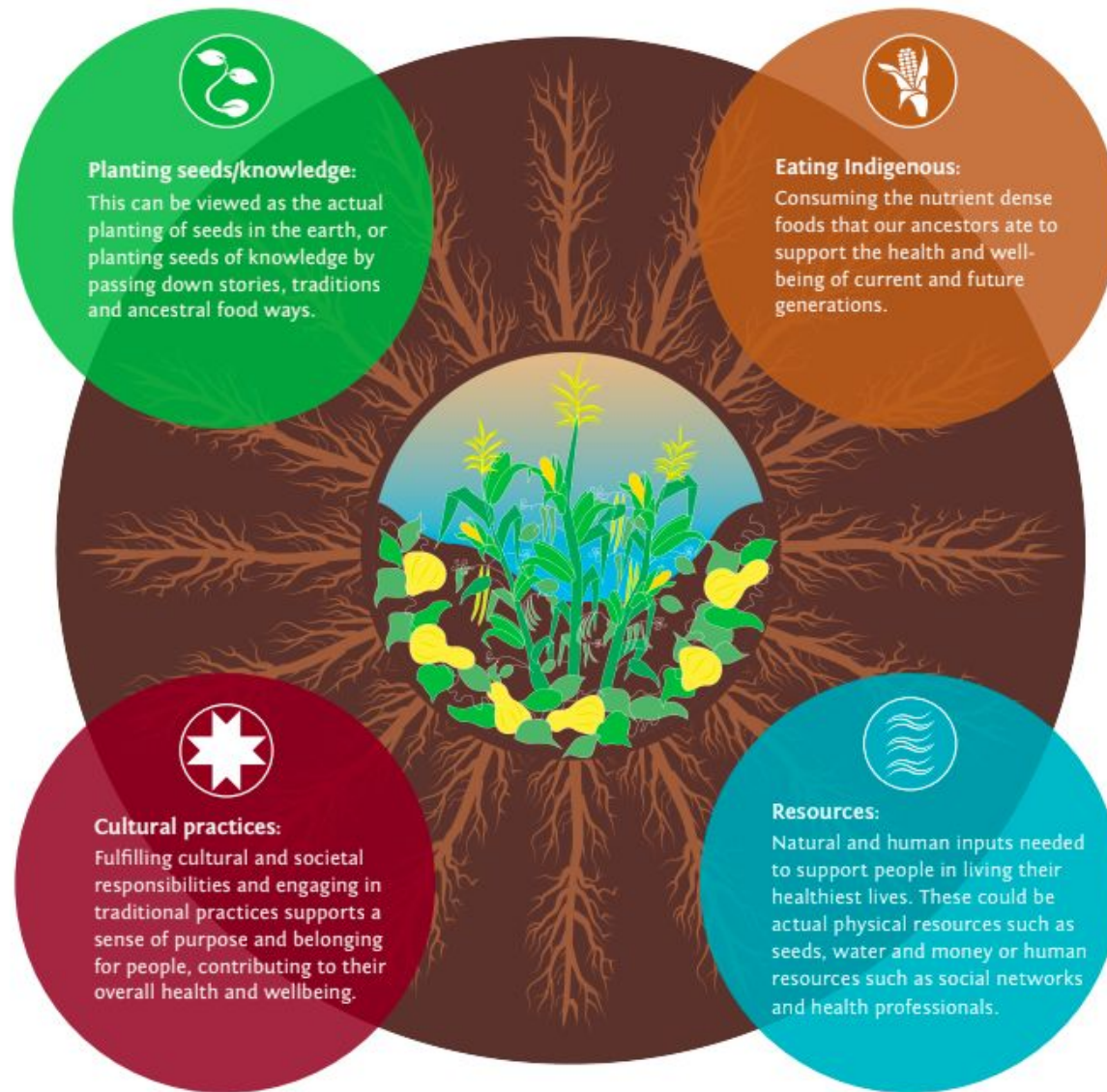


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Framework Guide

culture

“The learned and shared value, beliefs, norms, language and lifetime practices of a particular group that guides thinking, decisions and actions in patterned ways and is transmitted to succeeding generations.”



The Root System of the Framework

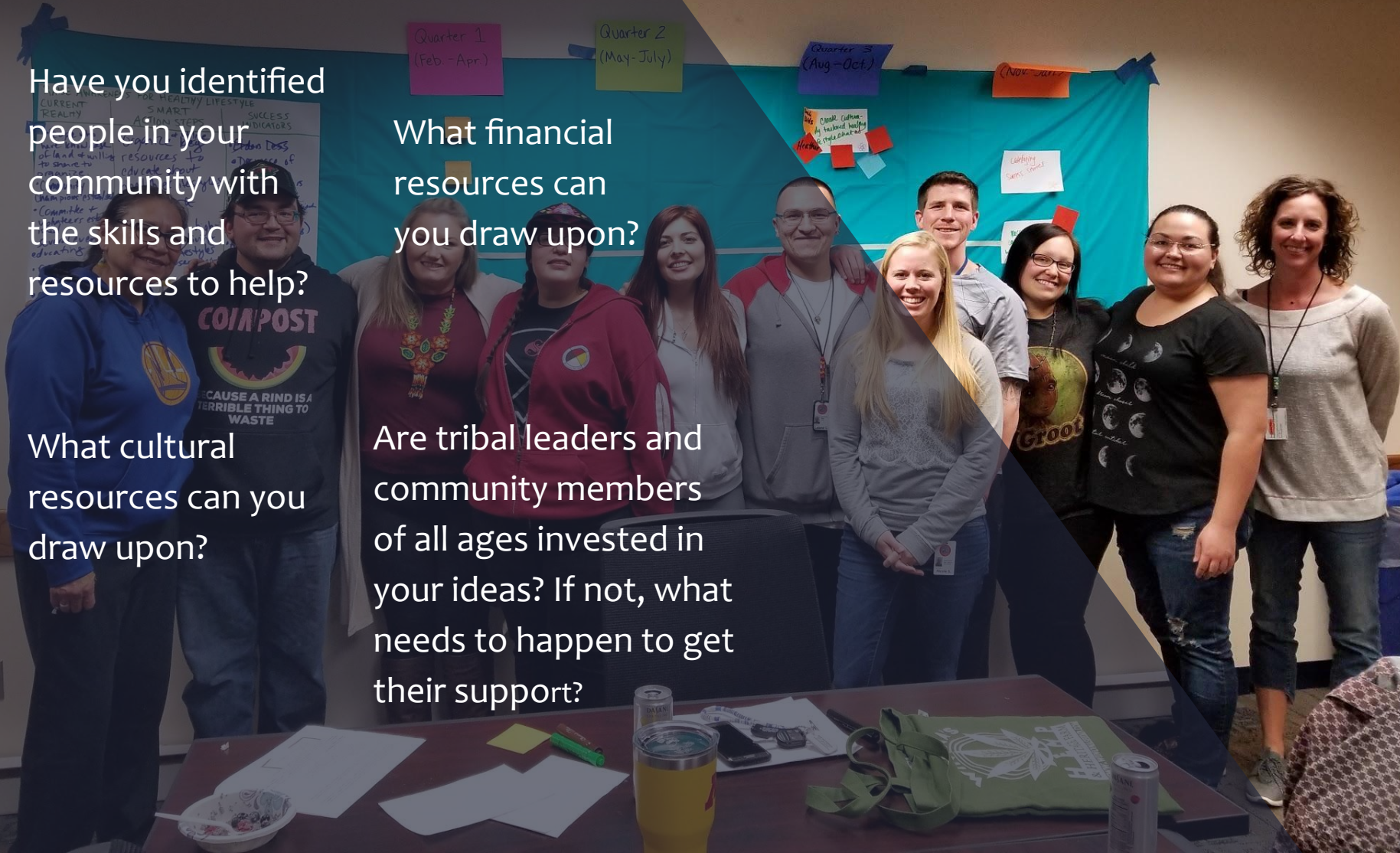
Discussion Questions

Have you identified people in your community with the skills and resources to help?

What cultural resources can you draw upon?

What financial resources can you draw upon?

Are tribal leaders and community members of all ages invested in your ideas? If not, what needs to happen to get their support?



The Stages of Life



Elders



- Invite elders to share traditional teachings, customs and stories with younger generations.
- Teach youth to serve elders first at community feasts.



- Include elders in program planning to connect them to gardening.



- Recruit elders to teach traditional seed saving and stewardship practices.



- Share harvest with elders in the community and with the elders nutrition program.





Discussion Questions

How can the food you eat contribute to health at each stage of life?

How does our relationship to the components of the root system change as we grow older?

How does food availability and quality impact health throughout the ages?

What are the teachings we have about our roles related to food in each stage of life?

The Changing Seasons



Summer

- Identify what is needed and make an action plan to reclaim tribal food sovereignty, with respect to our ancestors.



- Engage tribal leadership to support community health and food initiatives.



- Contribute to expanding local food economy (e.g. sell produce, start farmers market).
- Engage community members to plant Indigenous foods and pass on teachings.



- Harvest and enjoy seasonal garden produce, wild berries, fruits and roots.



Discussion Questions

A scenic autumn landscape featuring a paved path that curves through a park. The path is lined with trees whose leaves have turned vibrant shades of yellow, orange, and red. In the background, a calm lake reflects the sky, with a willow tree leaning over the water. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and seasonal.

What are your community's seasonal traditions around food and storytelling?

What food stories do you know, and what is being done to preserve and share them?

How is food prepared in the community? How are these practices shared among people and through time?

How can the community's relationship to food promote health in different seasons?

The Aspects of Health



Emotional

- Foster a healthy emotional connection to food.
- Teach respect and empathy for all living beings (plants and animals).



- Honor your emotional wellbeing by building a support network.
- Host and attend social gatherings with healthy foods.



- Nurture connections with the land and foster a sense of belonging by learning how to garden.



- Connect with others by cooking fun and healthy meals together.



Discussion Questions

A photograph of a garden with rows of plants and wooden trellises, overlaid with a dark diagonal shape containing text. The garden is set in a rural area with trees in the background. The plants are arranged in neat rows, and the trellises are made of wooden poles. The dark shape is a large, diagonal rectangle that covers the left and bottom-left portions of the image.

What does a healthy community look like to you?

What more do you need to make your vision of a healthy community a reality?

What food resources exist in your community?

How can they be used to create more positive change and normalize healthy eating?

How can you ensure that your vision of a healthy community is designed to be sustainable?

Mitakuye Oyasin “All Are Related”



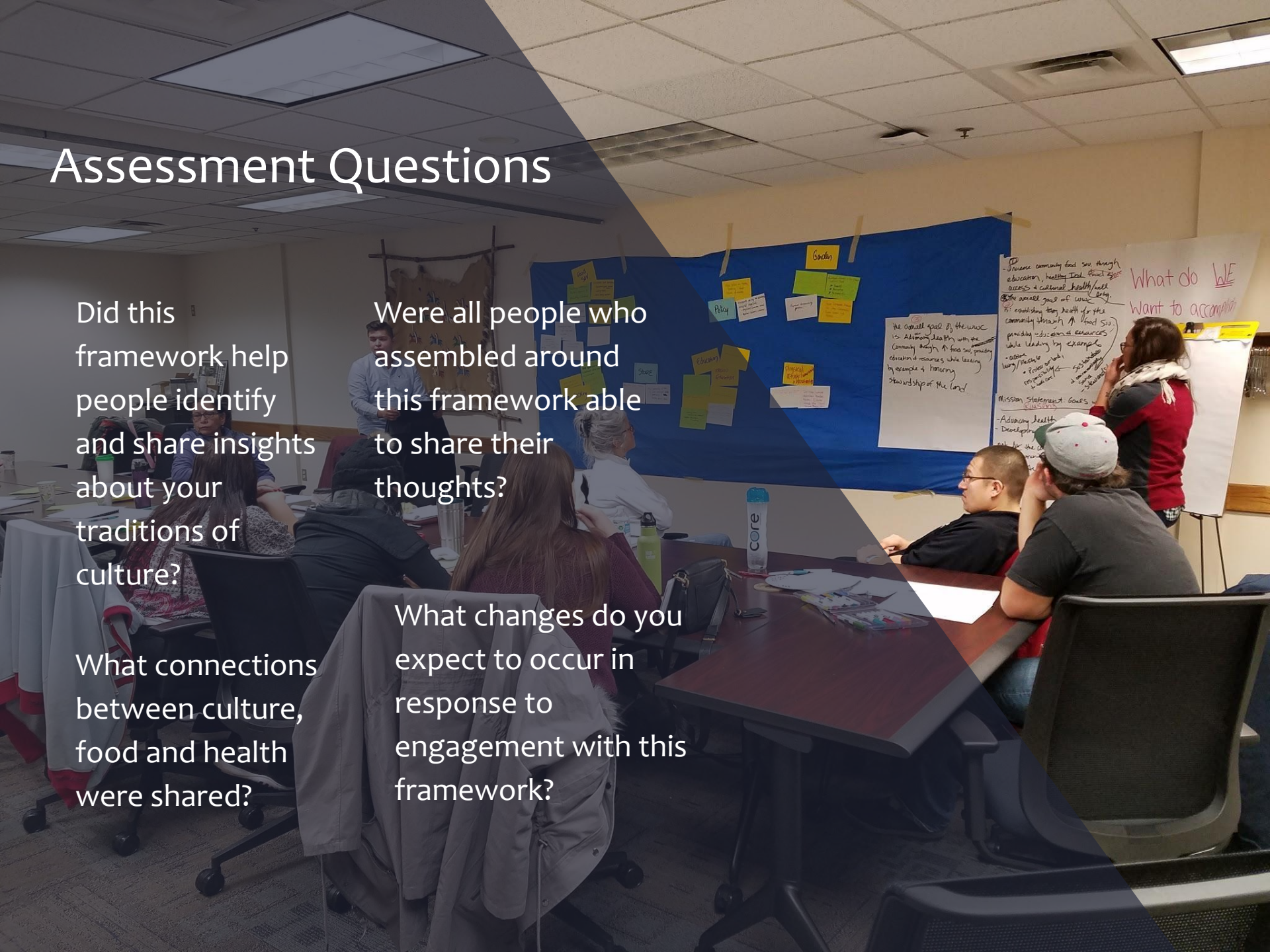
Assessment Questions


Did this framework help people identify and share insights about your traditions of culture?

What connections between culture, food and health were shared?

Were all people who assembled around this framework able to share their thoughts?

What changes do you expect to occur in response to engagement with this framework?



A close-up photograph of a dark-colored bowl filled with fresh blueberries. The berries are vibrant blue with a natural white bloom. A semi-transparent dark rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the bowl, containing white text. The background is a soft-focus, light-colored surface.

How can you apply the
framework in your tribal
community?

*“If we take care of today,
tomorrow will take care of itself.”*



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Mitakuye Oyasin

- Did this framework help people identify and share insights about your traditions of culture?
- Were all people who assembled around this framework able to share their thoughts?
- What connections between culture, food, and health were shared?
- What changes do you expect to occur in response to engagement with this framework?



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Prevention and Policy Resources

Ordering Nutritious & Indigenous Foods

GUIDELINES & CHECKLIST



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Serving Guidelines and Checklist

Guideline

Checklist (mark when purchased or ordered)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use 9 inch plates• Use 12 ounce bowls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select 9 inch plates<input type="checkbox"/> Select 12 ounce bowls |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fill half of the plate with colorful vegetables (fresh, frozen without sauce or low-sodium canned)• Serve fresh fruit on the side or as a salad topping | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select vegetables (carrots, dark leafy greens, squash, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> Select fruit as a side or salad topping (apples, berries, pineapple, etc.) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fill one quarter of the plate with lean protein• Ensure protein is not stacked higher than 1-1.5 inches off the plate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select a lean protein (beans, bison, venison, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure protein servings are not stacked higher than 1-1.5 inches |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fill one quarter of the plate with whole grains | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select whole grain products (brown rice, wild rice, corn, etc.) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If providing soup, request a low sodium broth based option | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select broth based, low sodium soup |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If providing bread, request a 100% whole grain without added sugar option | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select 100% whole grain bread |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Request foods are seasoned with herbs and spices rather than added salt• Choose low sodium options when processed items are served | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select foods seasoned with herbs and spices rather than added salt (basil, thyme, sage, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> Select processed foods labeled "reduced sodium," "low sodium," or "sodium free" (condiments, pickles, salad dressing, etc.) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure dessert dimensions are not larger than 2 inch by 2 inch• Choose fresh fruit for half or more of the dessert• Choose desserts that are 100 calories or less | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select dessert size 2 inch by 2 inch or smaller<input type="checkbox"/> Select desserts that are made with "reduced sugar," or "low sugar."<input type="checkbox"/> Select low-calorie dessert option |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not serve candy at community events• Serve better-for-you snack options* if candy is provided at holiday events (*see section 2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Do not select candy for community events<input type="checkbox"/> Select better-for-you options for holiday events |

FOOD & HEALING

A Nutrition Guide for American Indian & Alaska Native Cancer Survivors



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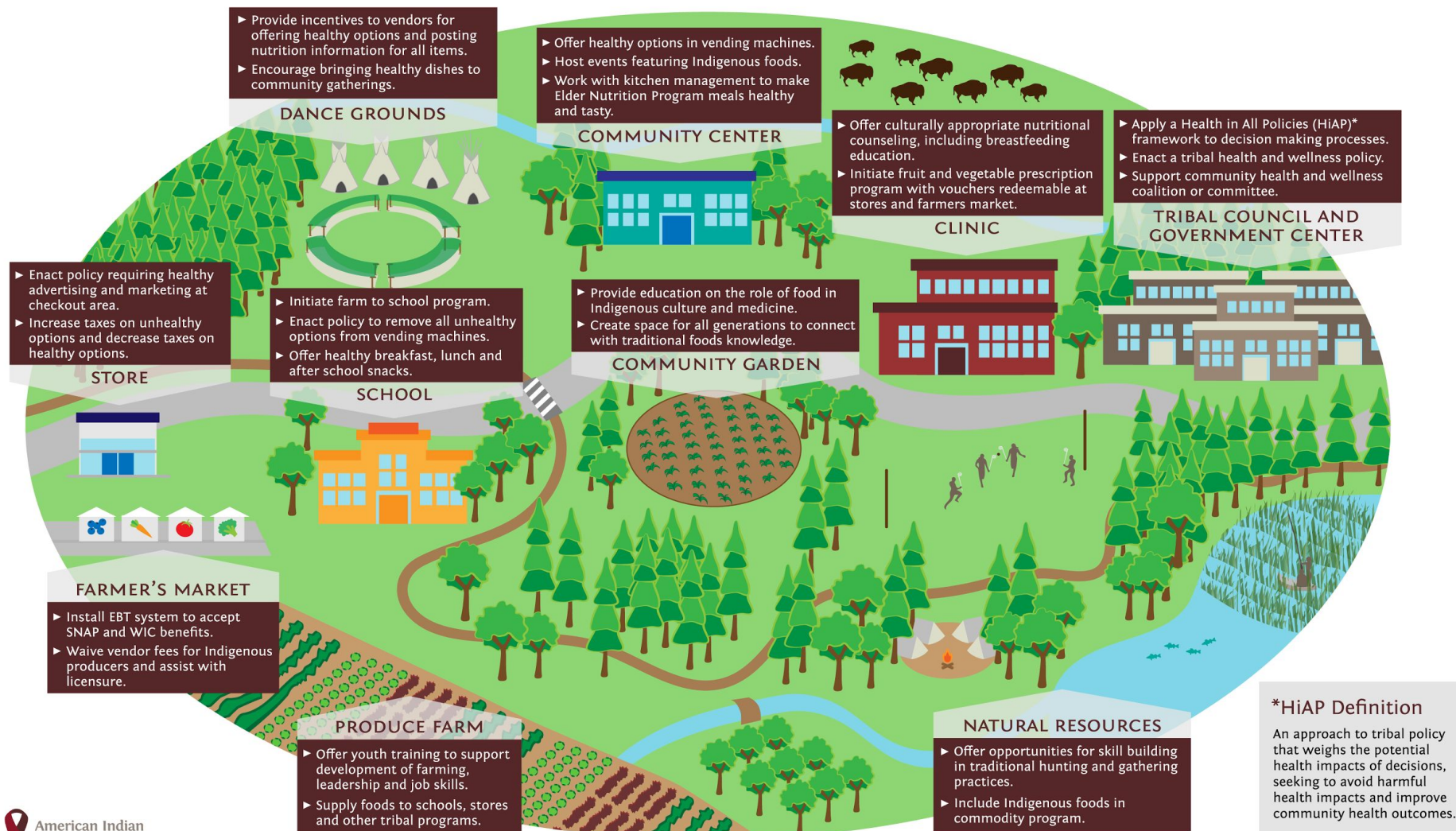
HEALTHY EATING FOR STRONG NATIVE COMMUNITIES

PROMOTING INDIGENOUS HEALTH

▶ Indigenous Foods: foods native to local area.

▶ Healthy Options: water, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, unprocessed foods.

▶ Unhealthy Options: sugary drinks and processed foods high in sugar, sodium and saturated fat.



*HiAP Definition

An approach to tribal policy that weighs the potential health impacts of decisions, seeking to avoid harmful health impacts and improve community health outcomes.



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