

HIGH
SCHOOL

VIDEO TOPIC SERIES

ACTIVITY

Episode Four: Cultural Solutions



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Episode Four: Cultural Solutions

Overview

This activity is based on Episode Four: Cultural Solutions of the Counterfeit Drugs series. The video and activity utilize a cultural lens to view prevention work by focusing on how a Native American community is using the cultural value of belonging as a tool for substance misuse prevention. The activity further explores the foundational value of belonging and what it means to truly belong to a community. Students also better understand how an individual's decisions can impact a community. The final takeaway for students is to engage in an interactive experience of community connection and loss to consider how their own sense of belonging, community, and culture could impact their personal decisions.

Learning Objectives

- Define the feeling of *belonging* and identify how people know when they belong to a community
- Connect a personal definition of *belonging* to the cultural value of belonging in a Native American community
- Determine how community connectedness impacts one's decision making
- Identify how the culture of a community can be used as a preventative measure against substance misuse such as counterfeit pills

Timing

45-60 minutes

Grade Level

9-12

Inquiry Questions

- *What is belonging?* How do people develop a sense of belonging?
- How does engaging with cultural practices or events help a person find belonging?
- How does a sense of belonging help us make better decisions?
- How can a sense of belonging be a preventative measure against substance misuse?

Materials

- Counterfeit Drugs Video Topic Series: Episode Four
- Capture Sheet 1: Community Connections
- Capture Sheet 2: The Heart of Prevention is Belonging
- Capture Sheet 3: View, Read, and Respond
- Capture Sheet 4: Planning Your Own Belonging Event

Background Information

Counterfeit pills often contain fentanyl and are more lethal than ever before. DEA officials report a dramatic rise in the number of counterfeit pills containing at least two mg of fentanyl, which is considered a deadly dose. Drug traffickers are using fake pills to exploit the opioid epidemic and prescription drug misuse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports more than 100,000 drug overdose deaths in the United States in the most recent 12-month reporting period, the most ever recorded. Fentanyl, the synthetic opioid most found in counterfeit pills, is the primary driver in this alarming increase in overdose deaths.

To address this complex problem, federal agencies are working to inform parents, teens, and educators about the dangers of counterfeit pills. This activity was created to give educators ideas and strategies for presenting the content in engaging

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

and informative ways. It provides detailed plans for educators to be prepared to engage, explain, discuss, and effectively facilitate the content in the presentation. The lesson is designed to cover one 45-60-minute class session, but it is flexible, depending on student's needs and time available.

For more information on counterfeit drugs, please visit: [One Pill Can Kill](#)

Teacher Preparation

It is essential to create a safe and comfortable classroom atmosphere for students to engage in the content of the DEA Counterfeit Drug Video Topic Series. It is suggested that the teacher set up classroom norms/rules such as:

- We value participation by everyone.
- We are open to hearing opinions that may be different from ours.
- We will respect what others have to share and allow them to share it without judgement.
- What we share will be kept confidential. We will not use names when sharing stories.

Discuss these norms with your students prior to beginning the activity and explain that the purpose is to have a safe place where everyone can feel comfortable sharing and learning.

At different points in the lesson, students may be tempted to share personal information about opioid misuse by themselves or others. As always, be sure to follow school or district policies about the sharing of personal information about minors.

Additional Resources

SAMSHA Fact Sheet on Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tttac_gona_fact_sheet_1.pdf

Official website for the [Wichita and Affiliated Tribes](#) in Oklahoma.

HEALTH STANDARDS

National Education Standards

- Standard 2: Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
- Standard 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Standard 8: Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.

Common Core Alignment and National Civics Standards

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1(5): Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Next Generation Science Standards

- HS-LS2-8: Evaluate evidence for the role of group behavior on individual and species' chances to survive and reproduce.

English Language Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

PROCEDURE

ENGAGE

- If students have engaged in prior episodes of the Counterfeit Drug series, begin the class with a review of what students have gathered so far about the counterfeit pill/fentanyl crisis. If not, it may be helpful to share some of the information from the background information.
- Share that today's focus will turn to a community that is using the Native American culture of their students and community members as a method of prevention and awareness for youth. More specifically, students will see a community from the [Wichita and Affiliated Tribes](#) in Oklahoma.
- Ensure students have Capture Sheet 1: Community Connections.
- Ask students to fill in the circles on the page with the communities or groups that they belong to. If students are unsure what defines a community, the teacher may want to provide examples such as sports teams, hobbies, religious groups, ethnicity, school clubs, family, etc. Allow students enough time to fill most or all of the bubbles.
- Then, prompt students to answer the reflection question at the bottom of the page. How do you know when you really belong to a group or community?
- To wrap up the Engage section, invite several students to share their initial reflections on how do you know when you really belong to a group or community?
- Tell students that they will come back to that Capture Sheet later in the lesson.

VIEW, READ, AND RESPOND

- Introduce Episode Four: Cultural Solutions to the students. Share that this episode is filmed in Anadarko, Oklahoma, of which a majority of the population identifies as Native American from the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. In this video, students will see how the community uses their Native culture as substance misuse prevention work. This is an opportunity to share any additional information about the tribe or community from the teacher resources.
- After watching the video, give students time to finish any video reflections on Capture Sheet 1: Community Reflections.
- If students seem to have questions about the video or community, this could be a time to pause and allow for any brief discussion or question and answer.
- After any potential discussion or questions, share Capture Sheet 2: The Heart of Prevention is Belonging and Capture Sheet 3: View, Read, and Respond with students.
- At the teacher's discretion, have students read the article aloud as a class or in small groups. Pause for any questions during the reading.
- Once students complete the reading, individually or in small groups, give 8–10 minutes for students to respond to the questions on Capture Sheet 3.
- If time allows, ask several students to share their responses to some of the questions. If time is limited, consider giving students time to discuss question three from the capture sheet, “how is culture used as a prevention tool in the Anadarko community?”
 - Students may choose to highlight the cultural practice of beading and dancing, or the use of regalia or grass houses. More information on the history, culture, and practices of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes can be found in this Oklahoma Indian Tribe Education Guide [Tribes of OK Education Guide Wichita Affiliated.pdf](#)

APPLY

- To help students apply new learning from the video and article content to their own community connectedness, this activity will ask students to share at least one of their communities listed in the introductory activity. This activity introduces a visual and interactive way to see how everyone is connected and dependent on multiple communities. This activity requires using a long ball of yarn or twine.
 - One student starts by sharing one of the groups or communities in which he or she feels belonging.
 - If another student feels belonging to that community, the student tosses him or her the ball of yarn while still hold the loose end. That student holds a piece of the yarn and shares another community in which he or she belongs.
 - This continues until students have passed the yarn around enough to create a visual web of connection.
 - Then, the teacher chooses a student who is in the midpoint of the connections and removes the student. The teacher tells students that this represents one classmate who is lost to taking counterfeit pills. The student drops their connection to the yarn and sits down.
 - Once the student drops that piece of the yarn, the two students who were connected to that person should drop their connections and sit.
- Move to another student who is still holding yarn and say that person lost his or her best friend to counterfeit pills and that the loss has been so traumatic that he or she is not able to keep connections with their community. Have that student drop the yarn and sit down. Then, have the two connecting students drop their yarn and sit down as well.
- Depending on the size of the class, the teacher may want to do this one more time by choosing a student to represent a mother or father who lost their child to counterfeit drugs. Repeat the same action.

Have students look at the leftover community connections and comment on what they observe and what gaps have been left. The connections are still there, but now they are distant and severed by even one student who created connections between others. To close, pose the question “How can a sense of belonging to that community impact the decisions you make?”
- If students are struggling to answer, comment on how losing just three people impacted the entire chain of connections and weakened their community ties. Emphasize that each individual person matters to a community and are interconnected.

WRAP UP

- As the activity closes, ask students to return to Capture Sheet 1: Community Connections. For their final task, students should connect their communities based on the people who share those communities. For example:

If a student puts basketball team in one of the bubbles and his or her friend who is on the team also belongs to the Boys and Girls club with the student, then draw a line between those two bubbles. If another basketball teammate is in the band with the student, the student will draw another line from Basketball to Boys and Girls Club.

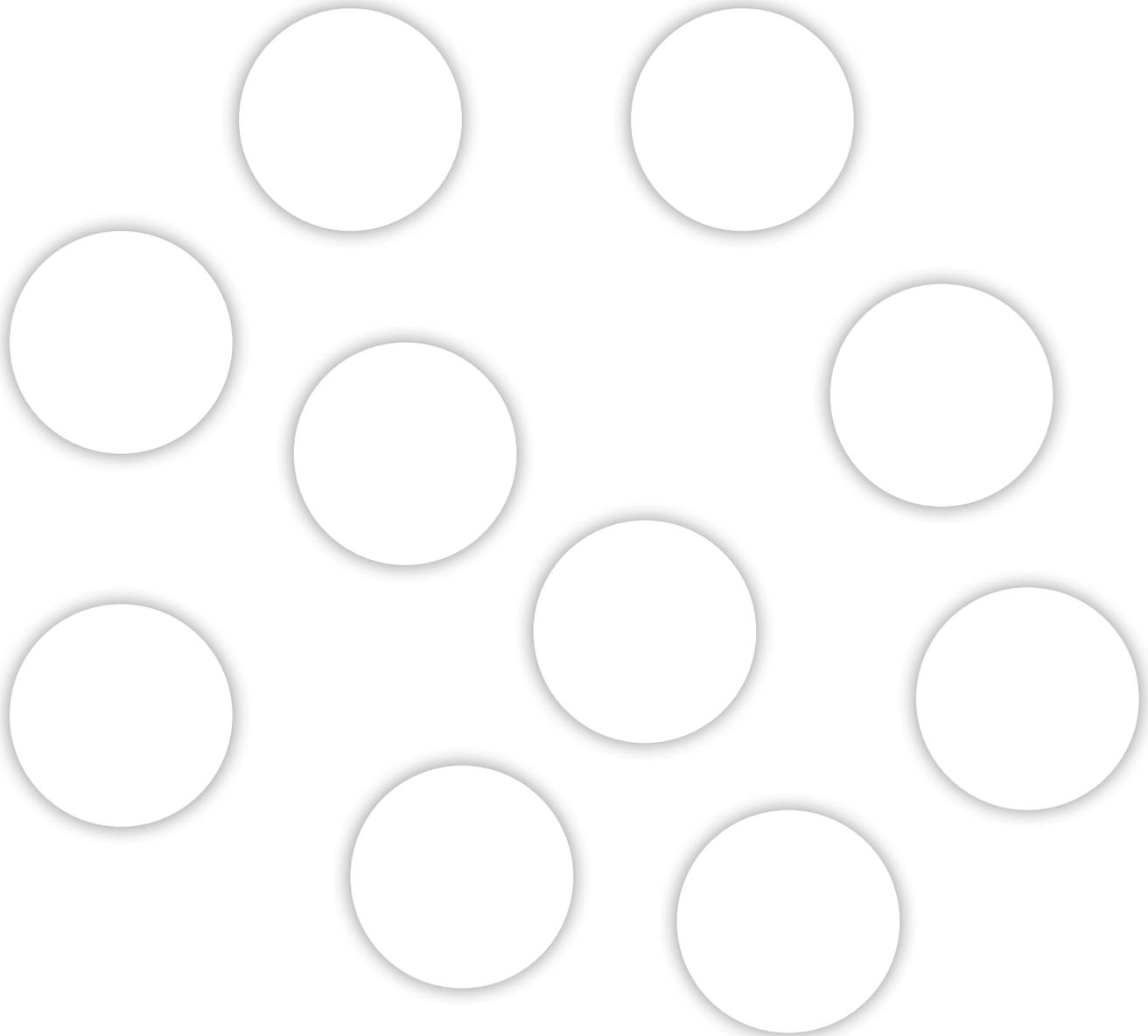
- As time allows, students should draw as many connection lines as they can to visualize how connected their communities are.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TASK

- Capture Sheet 4: Planning Your Own Belonging Event is a powerful extension and can be used as a follow-up activity or homework. If the class period is longer than 60 minutes, it can be used to extend the lesson timing.

CAPTURE SHEET 1: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Directions: In each of the bubbles, list one of the communities or groups you belong to. Try to fill as many bubbles as you can. Then, answer the reflection question below.



Reflection Question: How do you know when you really belong to a group or community?

CAPTURE SHEET 2: THE HEART OF PREVENTION IS BELONGING ARTICLE

The Heart of Prevention is Belonging

By Melanie Johnson, Whole Child Program Director
National Indian Education Association

The National Indian Education Association (NIEA) is a national non-profit organization formed in 1969, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, by Native American educators who were anxious to find solutions to improve the education system for Native children. NIEA advocates through legislation and programming at national and local levels to improve educational outcomes, promote education sovereignty, and sustain Native culture and language. <https://www.niea.org/>

A key aspect of the Drug Enforcement Administration's campaigns Operation Prevention and One Pill Can Kill is the belief that educating people on the dangers and accessibility of substances such as counterfeit drugs will help to prevent addiction and even death. Prevention is critical in counteracting the substance misuse in our communities. However, the work of prevention must look different across communities because each community is unique and diverse.

One of these communities who is dedicated to prevention work is the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, more specifically, the Tribal Youth Connections Substance Use Prevention Program. This community, which is featured in "Counterfeit Drugs: Episode 4: Cultural Solutions," is located in the town of Anadarko Oklahoma, which has a population of 5,745, with a 40.4% Native American population. Anadarko is known as the Indian Capital of the nation. So, what makes the Tribal Youth Connection prevention program unique?

The Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) starts with Belonging as the first phase of community healing and wellness, developed nearly four decades ago by The Native Wellness Institute. The GONA links historical and **intergenerational trauma** to the current unhealthy behaviors that we see and experience in our Native communities today. It also focuses on our cultural strengths as tools for living in balance. The remaining phases, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity ensures that everyone feels welcomed in an inclusive, open, safe, and trusting environment.

It is not surprising that the strength of the Tribal Youth Connections Substance Use Prevention Program is the facilitator's ability to create a sense of Belonging when delivering a cultural prevention activity. But what is meant when we use the term *belonging* in regard to prevention?

It means, that when culture is shared, such as beading, moccasin making, language, or any other cultural aspect of a tribal community, it encompasses mastery, independence, generosity, but the most important of these values is a sense of belonging.

Substance use is plaguing many of our tribal communities, such as the lethal use of fentanyl in creating counterfeit pills. Educating our young people about the dangers of these drugs while also weaving in cultural values or ways is how tribal communities are using prevention to combat substance use. When young people lack a sense of belonging, it can lead to risky behaviors when struggling with identity, especially if they find belonging in a group that encourages them to make poor decisions or engage in risky behavior.

When we use the term "Culture is Prevention," what we are really creating is a sense of belonging that is connected to family, school, community, and most importantly, to self. Creating a space for belonging is an act of love, it's safe, nurturing, and the key to community healing and interconnectedness.

More information on a Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) approach:

A GONA is a culture-based planning process where community members gather to address community-identified issues. It uses an interactive approach that empowers and supports American Indian/Alaska Native tribes.

What is a GONA?

The GONA focuses on the following four themes:

- **Belonging**—the GONA ensures that everyone feels welcomed in an inclusive, open, safe, and trusting environment
- **Mastery**—the GONA allows participants to take stock of how historical trauma impacts their communities and what fosters their resilience and holds them together
- **Interdependence**—the GONA initiates the planning process to assess resources and relationships, and to experience and strengthen interconnectedness
- **Generosity**—the GONA exercise of creating gifts to share with other participants symbolizes each participant's larger gift to their families and communities in helping to address and prevent mental and substance use disorders, prevent suicide, and promote mental health

Indigenous Theoretical Framework

- **Vision**—acknowledging the effects of historical trauma, honoring cultural values, and developing a vision of success
- **Circles of Relationships**—building quality and authentic relationships for effective work
- **Sense of Hope**—focusing on interconnectedness, the sacredness of the inner spirit, balance, and the responsibility to be life-long learners

SAMHSA Gathering of Nations Fact Sheet

https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tttac_gona_fact_sheet_1.pdf

CAPTURE SHEET 3: VIEW, READ, & RESPOND

Directions: After watching Episode Four and reading “The Heart of Prevention is Belonging,” respond to the questions below.

Based on your own experience and what you viewed and read, what is <i>belonging</i> ?	
How do the article and the video demonstrate a cultural perspective of <i>belonging</i> ?	
In the video, how is culture used as a prevention tool in the Anadarko community?	
How do the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes and the Tribal Youth Connections Substance Use Prevention Program build a sense of <i>belonging</i> with the youth in the community?	
How can <i>belonging</i> promote or even improve wellness?	

CAPTURE SHEET 4: PLANNING YOUR OWN BELONGING EVENT

Directions: Allow the prompts in the box to brainstorm a cultural event in your community that would help create a sense of belonging for young people.



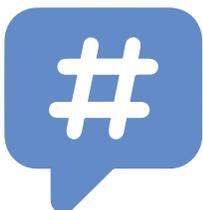
Briefly describe the community for which you will host your event. Why did you select this one?



What is a cultural value or practice of that community you would like to highlight or utilize?



Describe the event and how it could promote a better sense of belonging for people in the community.



How will you promote your event so that your community will be more interested in participating? For social media promotion, list multiple hashtags or slogans that may gain more attention.