PROCEDURES FOR ADAPTING THE CIRCLE OF LIFE CURRICULUM

Circle of Life is based on an AI/AN cultural perspective, however with 566 federally recognized AI/AN tribes, each with its own culture, beliefs and practices no single curriculum can fully represent all tribal viewpoints. Therefore each tribal community should review the COL curriculum and identify areas where cultural adaption may be needed.

The guidance below describes a process for adapting and tailoring Circle of Life. The formality of the process used will vary with the extent of changes required.

ADAPTATION PROCESS

Step 1: Recruit community members to review the curriculum
Recruit 3-5 people to review the curriculum. Ideally, the group should include educators, and those with cultural and/or content expertise. Ask the group to review both the online and group lessons. Although the online curriculum cannot be changed, class facilitators can discuss any cultural concerns with youth during group lessons.

Step 2: Identify areas that should be adapted
Have the group identify areas where adaptation is desired. Examples of adaptations may include:
1) Substituting local examples, stories or symbols
2) Adding content or activities to enhance concepts
3) Identifying areas where community members can assist in presenting the material
4) Developing local artwork

Adaptations should be consistent with the learning objectives for each chapter.

Step 3: Developing Adaptations
If extensive adaptations are recommended, it might be useful to engage a second committee consisting of local experts to help develop the adaptations. Members of this committee should include persons with strong backgrounds in the local culture, education and at least one person with a public health background to ensure the medical accuracy of the material. The committee will need enough time to develop adaptations and to get input from teachers and other community members as appropriate.

Step 4: Incorporate changes into the lesson plans
Once adaptations have been approved, they will need to be added to the lesson plans so that they may be used by those teaching the program.

Step 5: Evaluate Adaptations
Discuss the acceptability of the adaptations with facilitators after they have completed the program. If necessary make additional changes.

TAILORING THE MATERIAL
The COL curriculum is designed to be tailored for different audiences. For sensitive topics different options are provided to allow facilitators to cover the material in greater or less depth depending on the maturity and needs of the audience. Decisions about tailoring should be made with input from various stakeholder groups such as parents, teachers, etc.