Session 4

Completing the Circle:
Teaching Our First Teachers

Building Self-Esteem
In Our Children
The materials in the Facilitator’s Notes are for your use ONLY.

They are not to be given directly to participants or copied for their use. This is particularly true for the Medicine Wheel Teaching.

If there is no Elder who can share their own Medicine Wheel Teaching or local traditional belief, we recommend that you draw the wheel itself on a flipchart or white board and then either read or paraphrase the words of the Teaching with your group. Let the group know there are many ways to interpret the Medicine Wheel and that this is only one of those ways.
MEDICINE WHEEL

Honour Our Children

Foundations of all Nations
Teachings we need to model for our children
Medicine Wheel Teaching

Honour Our Children

Elder Vera White Eyes Jones said this Medicine Wheel Teaching is about the Seven Sacred Teachings and how they tell us about the skills needed to live good lives and raise good children. These are essential to the building of all Nations.

She said that one must have all seven of the Teachings in order to be able to properly model for our children and provide them with the tools they need for life.

These are often known as the Seven Grandfathers or the Seven Grandfather Teachings and they are all aspects of our emotional, spiritual and physical and intellectual development.

They remind us how to treat our children and each other. They also remind us that each of us is responsible for taking care of the children and our Mother Earth and that the children are the ones who must care for Mother Earth tomorrow, and for the generations to come, so we must teach them well.

The Seven Grandfathers are:

Wisdom — Love — Respect — Bravery — Honesty — Humility — Truth

On the Medicine Wheel they are shown coming from the North down to the centre, which is the balance point of the Wheel.

The Elder stressed that all seven of these Teachings must be used together.

You cannot be honest if you use only one or two of the Teachings, and if someone tries to leave one out it would be like they were seeking the opposite of that Teaching. For example if you don’t practise honesty, you cheat. If you don’t practise truth, you lie.

We should all try to live by these seven Teachings. Sometimes it may be hard to apply all of them daily, but we must try if we want to live a balanced life and be good role models for our children.

These seven Sacred Gifts were taught to the First Elder, who then passed them to the next generation, just like parents share knowledge with their children.

Below are two versions of these Teachings. As facilitator, you can decide which is most appropriate to share with your group.

The first is the one most commonly seen but the second has a good explanation that puts the Teachings in everyday contexts making them easier for people to understand.
Version 1

- To cherish Knowledge is to know Wisdom.
- To know Love is to know Peace.
- To Honour all of the children is to have Respect.
- Bravery is to face the foe with Integrity.
- Honesty in facing a situation is to be Brave.
- Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of creation.
- Truth is to know all these things.

Version 2

Wisdom:
To learn from life experiences and the teachers in our lives, including Elders and children.

Love:
To be at peace with yourself and able to express love to your children, family, friends and community through your actions and words.

Respect:
To accept everyone as they are without judgment. Respect The Creator’s work, including yourself.

Courage or Bravery:
To do the things that are difficult but need to be done or said, even in the most difficult of times.

Honesty:
To say and act in an honest way, with no hidden agenda. To be honest in every action and provide good feelings in your heart.

Humility:
To be modest by not showing off or bragging of one’s own importance. To know that you are equal to everyone else in the world — no better or no less.

Truth:
To know and believe in the Seven Grandfather Teachings and to live by them.
Statement of Beliefs and Values about Children

While First Nations people, Métis and Inuit have distinct cultures and languages, they also share common beliefs, values and histories. It is with this in mind that the Statement of Beliefs and Values about Children was written.

We believe:

► That children are a gift from the Creator.
► That our children have a right to live proudly as Aboriginal people in the lands of their ancestors.
► That children have a right to learn their respective Aboriginal language(s) and histories, and adults have a responsibility to pass on the instructions that the Creator gave in the beginning of time. These instructions are reflected in our languages, cultural beliefs and cultural practices.
► That each child is part of what makes a community whole.
► That it is essential for children to develop meaningful relationships with Elders, the carriers of knowledge and history.
► That children, under the guidance of Elders, will learn to love learning throughout their lives.
► That adults are community role models who are to teach children how to live a good life.
► That children deserve opportunities to gain knowledge and experience of how to live a good life.
► That children acquire knowledge by watching, listening and doing, and adults are responsible for encouraging and guiding them in all those activities.
► That children, through being loved, valued and encouraged, will gain the courage, the strength and the wisdom to use the power of a good mind and spirit in all that they do.
► That children have a right to enjoy the opportunities that education offers.
► That children have a right to live in healthy, self-determining communities that are free of violence.

— Source: Public Health Agency of Canada website, Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) program
The Seven Sacred Gifts

The following is an anecdote based on discussions with Elder Vera White Eyes Jones.

During conversations with the Elder, she spoke about how every child is given the Seven Sacred Gifts. The first five gifts are given to children at the time they are born. These gifts are the ability to smell, touch, hear, feel and see.

There are two additional gifts but they must be earned. The first of these is to be able to predict what will happen in the future and the second and final gift is to be able to foresee the future and be able to share what you have seen.

With age and accumulated knowledge, some older people can learn to predict what might happen in the future based on their past experiences and memories and their connection to the world that helps them pick up unseen signals from the world around them.

The next step is to actually be able to accurately foresee what will happen in the future and pass the information on to those around you.

When I originally spoke with the Elder on the phone she said she was making a big turkey dinner because she was expecting company and wanted to have a nice meal ready to welcome them. I didn’t question it at the time but when I drove up to see her the following day, she said that her son had come in just as she was beginning to serve dinner and that she had a place set on the table for him.

During our time together I found out that her son, who had been working in British Columbia for some time, had made a sudden decision to come home and had not told anyone about it. He just jumped into his car and drove home. At the same time his daughter, who was pregnant and overdue, had been talking to Vera (her grandmother) about her fears for the child she carried. Vera assured her that the child was just fine and would not be born until its father was there and that he would be.

When Vera and I were sitting having a cup of tea together, her son walked in. He said he had just phoned his daughter and found out that she was going to be admitted to the hospital the following Monday so they could induce the birth. Vera told him that was nonsense and was adamant that now that he was home the child could and would be born without medical intervention. That weekend Vera’s son drove down to visit his daughter who went into labour and delivered a healthy baby boy.

Vera had foreseen the whole thing and used what she had seen to comfort her granddaughter and prepare for her son’s arrival.

It was clear from the way she spoke about the incident that she did not consider this to be an out of the ordinary occurrence in any way. It was just part of her life.
A Medicine Bag is an ancient item that spiritually represents and supports the person who wears it. Medicine Bags can be found in many cultures, throughout time. They contain natural objects such as leaves, feathers, and stones, herbs such as sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and lavender, and other objects that the wearer considers to be spiritually significant.

A Medicine Bag can be as small as one inch by one inch or as large as 30 inches in length. The traditional Medicine Bag was a soft leather bag with a flap that folded over the top. Most often it would have a thong long enough to go around the neck of the wearer so it could be worn next to the heart but some had shorter ties and were tied to the belt. Traditionally they would have been decorated with fine beadwork and leather fringing.

As a person travelled through life they would remove items that had lost their significance and add items that had a special attraction to or resonance with their lives. For example, a special shell or a feather or a piece of pine tree that held special meaning.

A Medicine Bag is a sacred item and should never be opened by anyone but the person who owns and wears it. It contains items that have special meaning to the wearer, items that help them feel better about themselves, that remind them of the good things in their life and the gifts they have been given by the Creator. For some people it offers a sense of protection and contains items that connect them with totems or spirit guides. Because it is sacred, the owner should never talk to others about what is in it.

Carrying a Medicine Bag increases your awareness of your own sacredness and the bag becomes sacred too. As a person goes through life they find other things they want to add to their Medicine Bag. If they wear it and add to it throughout the years it becomes a spiritual scrapbook of their life, travels, gifts and achievements.

The Medicine Bag activity used in this session teaches that each person is special, is worthy of self-esteem, and is a gift from the Creator. The participants make and decorate a cloth bag into which they place symbols of what makes them feel good and makes them special.

The hope is that as they move through their lives they will replace the original paper symbols with real objects that represent their lives, talents, and special gifts so that they are always reminded of their personal worth and that the Creator has created a special place in the world that only they can fill.
Oral Communication

To look at some of the ways we use oral communication with family, with friends and with others in our community.

1 Remind the group of how they introduced themselves at the beginning of the session on self-esteem and how they listened quietly when others spoke, either in English or in their own language. They also listened to the opening ceremony, the prayer and the Aboriginal story. They took part in the discussion on self-esteem and they played a game in which they tried to make others feel good about themselves. For the whole time they were using the Essential Skill of oral communication.

2 Explain that ‘oral communication’ is just another term for ‘speaking and listening’. It includes:

- having a conversation, in person or on the phone
- comforting and reassuring someone
- giving clear information to someone you don’t know
- listening closely and understanding instructions
- giving a presentation to a group, like this group
- discussing with someone to work out a problem (sometimes even quarrelling)

Oral communication is one of our most important skills. It helps us to get along with others and to smooth over difficult situations. We can show self-confidence in our speech. The way we speak and listen can help others to feel good about themselves.

3 You and the group will now explore a few aspects of oral communication by role playing pairs of situations. Player A goes first. Some people will be more willing to role play than others. Encourage the shy ones to take part too, but be careful of their comfort (or discomfort) levels. When necessary, give guidance to Actor A and Actor B so that the group understands the differences in words, tone and body language in each situation. Aha! Here’s where your oral communication skills come in handy!
## The Words We Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player A</th>
<th>Player B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You are explaining how to prepare a special dish. The other person speaks very little of your language. Use simple words and speak slowly and clearly.</td>
<td>Now you’re explaining the same thing to someone who speaks your language fluently. You can use more complicated language.</td>
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<td>You are having an interview with your child’s school principal. You are telling her about a problem in the classroom that you are not happy about. You are polite and respectful to her because you want her full co-operation.</td>
<td>You are telling your friend about the same problem at school. Now you can really open up and express your true feelings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You are having a very bad day and, as a result, you are telling your son all the things he’s doing wrong. “Your music is too loud. Turn it down” “Your room is a mess. Clean it up.” (Add a few more of your own.)</td>
<td>The next day you’ve calmed down and you realize that you’ll get more co-operation from your son if you speak positively. “Hey, that’s good music. I’d like you to turn it down a notch so I can really enjoy it.” (Add a few more of your own.)</td>
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### The Feelings That Show in Our Tone of Voice

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<th>Player A</th>
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<tr>
<td>You walk into the kitchen and find that the children are preparing lunch for you. There have been many spills and food is all over the room. This is the last straw. You let them know that you’re very annoyed as you start to clean up the mess.</td>
<td>Instant replay: you walk into the kitchen and find that the children are preparing lunch for you. There have been many spills and food is all over the room. You are touched by their thoughtfulness and you want them to know that you appreciate their efforts. You still have to clean up.</td>
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<th>Player A</th>
<th>Player B</th>
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<tr>
<td>You are woken up in the middle of the night by the phone. It turns out to be a wrong number and your tone of voice lets the caller know you’re not happy.</td>
<td>The next time you get a wrong number in the middle of the night the caller sounds very upset. You don’t want to make the person feel worse so your tone is more understanding.</td>
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### Our Body Language

Body language refers to the ways you communicate without using words — the position of your arms and shoulders, the expression on your face, eye contact, how close you stand to the other person, hand gestures. Ask members of the group to show these attitudes and emotions using body language:

- fear
- boredom
- interest
- happiness

This is a good chance to discuss how body language may be different in different cultures. Learners could give examples from their own experience.
AGENDA — Session 4

1  Welcome and warm-Up
2  Overview of ground rules and journals
3  Medicine Wheel Teaching and Story-Telling
4  Presentation of key words and phrases
5  What Is self-esteem?
   **Concept:**
   Self-esteem is the feeling we have about ourselves. It can go up and down.

6  Building Self-esteem In our children
   **Key Concept:**
   Self-esteem is like a Medicine Bag. We can learn to find ways to fill it when our self-esteem is low. We can help to build our children’s self-esteem.

7  Self-esteem guessing game

8  Things to do at home

9  Summary

It is strongly recommended that facilitators read the background piece on Medicine Bags (provided in the Facilitator Notes section) prior to beginning this unit.
Objectives:

1. To develop an understanding of what self-esteem is.
2. To learn ways to build self-esteem in ourselves.
3. To learn and practise ways to build self-esteem in our children.
4. To practise reading and writing positive self-esteem statements.
5. To practise communication skills with others in the group.
6. To reinforce storytelling traditions.
7. To consider some factors that can affect self-esteem.

Materials Needed:

- Medicine Wheel graphic
- Talking Stick or Feather
- flip chart
- unit completion Certificate
- materials for Smudge Ceremony
- materials for Medicine Bags
- markers, pens, pencils, & paper

Hand-outs:

1. Key Words
2. Word Search for Key Words 1 (higher level)
3. Word Search for Key Words 2 (lower level)
4. Make Your Own Medicine Bag
5. Self-Esteem, The Feeling We Have About Ourselves
6. Bad Day
7. Good Day
8. Turning a Bad Day into a Good One
9. Building Self-Esteem in Our Children
10. Positive Messages for Our Children
11. Fill in the Blanks
12. Session Certificate of Completion
Procedures

1 WELCOME AND WARM-UP

Facilitator welcomes the participants as they arrive and encourages them to sign in on the attendance form and to make out nametags for themselves using their first names.

Whenever possible an Elder opens the session with a prayer and smudge ceremony. The use of sage or sweetgrass is encouraged if appropriate to the location of the program.

If no Elder is available an Opening Prayer has been provided in the facilitator’s resource section in Appendix ‘A’ at the end of this manual.

Introduce yourself briefly (background, names and ages of children) and give a short introduction to the Completing the Circle: Teaching Our First Teachers program.

Ask participants to give their names, their children’s names and ages, their Nation, and to say hello to the group. If anyone speaks in their Native tongue they should be encouraged to do this using words and gestures.

2 OVERVIEW OF GROUND RULES AND JOURNALS

Review the ground rules (found in the Introduction), stressing that all opinions will be listened to and that there are many different ‘right’ ways to deal with our children.

Remind them that everything said in the group is confidential.

If you are using these sessions sequentially it is important to review the follow-up activities and journal from the previous week. This allows the participants an opportunity to share insights that they may have gained based on that week’s activities. It also reinforces the importance of using the journal regularly.

Encourage participants to write in their journals, even if it is only a few sentences.
3 MEDICINE WHEEL TEACHING AND STORY-TELLING

The Elder should be invited to share a Medicine Wheel Teaching or local traditional Teaching related to the topic of this session. If no Elder is available, you may use the Medicine Wheel Teaching provided in the Facilitator’s Notes for this session by drawing the wheel itself on a flipchart or white board and then either reading or paraphrasing the words of the Teaching with your group. Let the group know there are many ways to interpret the Medicine Wheel and that this is only one of those ways.

The important role that the Medicine Wheel plays in understanding our world should be stressed as well as its historical significance in the Native culture.

Point out that the Medicine Wheel is used throughout the Completing the Circle program to establish or restore the balance in given situations.

Each session begins with an Aboriginal story relating to the theme. The story may be read by the facilitator, the Elder, or a participant. See the Appendix for the story entitled, “Old Man and the Lynx”. Sample questions for discussion are:

- Who are the main characters in the story?
- Did you like the story? Why or why not?
- What game were the prairie dogs playing?
- What message do you get from the story?

Make sure the person who is asked to read is comfortable with the idea of reading to the group and has been given time to practise the story beforehand.

**Facilitators are encouraged to modify the procedures used in the following activities to accommodate the ability and size of their group.**
4  PRESENTATION OF KEY WORD FAMILIES  ................................................ (Handout)

The key words for this session have been organized in word ‘families’. Participants at a more basic skills level can focus on the root words shown in bold. Others can try those in the word family below the root word. At no time should any participant feel singled out or feel that they don’t have access to the same thing the others are getting and everyone has the option to challenge themselves if they want to.

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It is not necessary to use all the words on the list, but reminding learners of other words in the word family lets them get more mileage out of the original word and draws attention to spelling patterns and so on.

Vocabulary activities, like the word searches, are offered at two levels with only small changes, so that it’s not obvious who’s getting the ‘easy’ ones.

**Note!**

**Word Search** ................................................................. (Handouts)

Provide participants with the word search handout that is most appropriate to their skill levels. Word Search 2 is less complex than Word Search 1 and uses easier words.
5 WHAT IS SELF-ESTEEM?

Self-esteem is the way we feel about ourselves.

More on feelings can be found in Session 1 — “Speaking & Listening Skills”

Self-esteem can go up and down.

“If we feel good, we have high self-esteem. If we feel bad, we often have low self-esteem.”

Each of us is responsible for how we express ourselves because our words have the ability to help or hurt people. We can say things that help people feel good about themselves (build their self-esteem) or hurt people (break down their self-esteem).

What are some things that make us feel good?

Brainstorm some ideas from the group. Begin with an example: “When people smile at me, I feel good. Can you tell me some things that make you feel good?”

What are some things that make us feel bad?

Brainstorm ideas as above. This is a good opportunity to address issues such as abuse and prejudice and the importance of dealing with these problems in order to maintain self-esteem.

Making a Medicine Bag ........................................................ (handout)

Refer to the handout for general directions for making a small Medicine Bag.

Traditionally a Medicine Bag would be made of soft leather or hide decorated with fine beadwork and a leather thong would be used to close the bag and wear it around the neck.

The directions given on the handout are for a small Medicine Bag made of material decorated with hand-drawn decorations and a string or cord drawstring. If possible the material should be a natural colour in an earth tone like tan.
If this optional activity is going to be used, it is strongly recommended that the facilitator read the background piece on Medicine Bags in the Facilitator’s Notes.

Self-Esteem — The Feeling We Have About Ourselves ....................... (Handout)

With the group, read the definition of self-esteem given on the handout — The feeling we have about ourselves. Continue, by explaining that self-esteem can be thought of as a Medicine Bag. Ask if anyone knows what a Medicine Bag is.

We can fill up our bag by doing good things for ourselves and others and putting things in it that remind us of good things in our lives. This will make us feel good and add to our self-esteem.

Ask the group to count off — one, two, three, one, two, three — repeating until everyone has a number. Ask that all the ones move together into one group, then the twos and the threes. Point out areas in the room where each group can gather.

It is VITAL that participants NOT be asked to share any information about what they have chosen for their Medicine Bags. What is in a person’s Medicine Bag is considered to be sacred and far too personal to be shared with anyone else.

For groups who DO make themselves a Medicine Bag:

In their groups, ask them to think of things that make them feel good and that will help to increase their self-esteem. Ask them to write these on small slips of paper and put them into their Medicine Bags. They could also cut out pictures from magazines or hand draw representations of these ideas on slips of paper.

Let them know that at a later date they can replace these paper slips with real objects that remind them of good things or good experiences.

Before they put any items in their Medicine Bags they should be asked to take a moment to think about the meaning of these items and why they decided they wanted to carry them in this way. As they are added to the Medicine Bag the wearer should bless them by thanking the Creator, Mother Earth and her creatures for providing these things for them.
In the case of paper slips or pictures, they are giving thanks for what they represent but when they begin to replace the papers with real items they can be more specific. As an example, they might thank Mother Earth for a pebble but thank the actual animal or bird if the item were a shell, bone or feather.

Since Medicine Bags are so personal and sacred within Aboriginal culture, the participants must NOT be asked to share anything about what they wrote or put into their Medicine Bags. Instead, ask them to form a circle and discuss how it feels to have gone through this exercise and to have created their own Medicine Bags. This would be an appropriate place to refer back to the Medicine Bag Teachings to reinforce the importance of what the participants have done.

Congratulate participants for taking a positive step forward by filling their Medicine Bags with so many good things for building their self-esteem. Remind them that whenever they need or want to, they can use the contents of their Medicine Bags to remember the positive things in their lives. Also, they can add to their Medicine Bags throughout their lives.

**For groups who DO NOT make a Medicine Bag:**

In their groups, ask them to think of things that make them feel good and that will help to increase their self-esteem. Ask them to write these on their copy of the Medicine Bag handout. When they’ve had enough time to do this, ask the participants to share their ideas. Record these on the flip chart for other groups to read and copy if they wish.

Congratulate participants for thinking of so many good ideas for building their self-esteem.

**We all have BAD Days and GOOD Days** ........................................ (3 Handouts)

Using the handout titled Bad Day, ask participants to think of words, groups of words, or drawings that tell about themselves on a bad day, and ask them to write them on their handouts.

Using the handout titled Good Day, ask participants to think of words, groups of words, or drawings that tell about how they feel on a good day. They can write these on their handouts.

Now ask the participants to talk about what things could help them to change a bad day to a good day. Their ideas should be recorded on the handout titled Turning a Bad Day into a Good One.
Ask group 1 to tell what they wrote for a bad day.

Ask group 2 to tell what they wrote for a good day.

Ask group 3 to share their ideas about how to turn a bad day into a good day.

Have the participants explain what ‘building self-esteem’ means to them. Encourage the use of examples from their lives.

*If the group is large enough to be divided into groups, their information can be collected as described above. If the group is smaller, collect it directly from the participants. Responses could be recorded on a flip-chart.*

**Good Feelings and Bad Feelings**

Put a sign on one side of the room saying **GOOD Feelings** and on the other put a sign reading **BAD Feelings**.

Tell the participants that the things we say can make a person feel good about themselves (i.e. build their self-esteem) or make them feel bad (i.e. break down their self-esteem).

Explain that you are going to read a series of comments to them. As they hear each one they should think about how they would feel if someone said that to them. Ask the participants to move to the **GOOD Feelings** sign if the comment would make them feel good about themselves or the **BAD Feelings** sign if it would make them feel bad.

After each question encourage the participants to take a moment to talk to each other about how the comment made them feel and possibly a time when someone said something similar to them.

**Comments to read aloud:**

Thanks for listening to me.

Don’t be stupid!

Who asked for your opinion?

You’re such a caring person.

I like hangin’ with you, you’re fun!

You’re honest, I like that.

If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a thousand times …!
Getting better, keep up the good work!

Can’t you get anything right?

I like that you are not afraid to try things.

You are a real friend.

After the exercise explain that everyone has the right to express themselves but we need to understand how powerful our words can be.

What we say can help those around us (build self-esteem) or hurt them (break down self-esteem). Each of us is responsible for what we say because our words have the ability to help or hurt people. Most people do not understand the impact their words and actions have on those around them, especially on those who trust them and look up to them, like their children.

“Can you think of some things you could say to your children that would either build their self-esteem or break it down?”

6 BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM IN OUR CHILDREN

Ask what it means to ‘build self-esteem’ in our children. How can we make them feel good about themselves?

Continue with something like: “We can help our children to feel good about themselves by saying things that build their self-esteem”.

Building Self-Esteem in Our Children ........................................... (Handout)

“What are some things that will help your children to feel good about themselves?”

With participants working in pairs, ask them to think of ideas with their partner and write them on the handout.

Share the ideas with the group. Record them on the flip chart under the heading Building Self-esteem in Our Children.

Positive Messages for Our Children ........................................... (Handout)

Read through the ideas for building self-esteem in our children. Ask if anyone has a question about these or can think of an example to share with the group.
Remind them to praise their children when they do something well. It will fill their Medicine Bag and help them to feel good about themselves.

Ask the group to explain to you what ‘praise’ means and to give an example. “When children feel good, they behave well and learn better. When we help our children learn to build their own self-esteem, we are being good parents.”

7 GUESSING GAME

Explain that in a guessing game one person asks a question and the other tries to guess the answer.

Ask participants to choose a new partner and think about something they like about that person.

Each person takes a turn asking their partner to guess what they like about them. Each time they guess, repeat it and ask them to guess again. If they guess correctly, they are praised (Good guess!) and switch partners.

You could model an example with one member of the group to make sure the participants understand the exercise before they begin.

For example:

Facilitator I know something special about you.

Participant I like to help.

Facilitator Yes, you do like to help, but that’s not it, Try again.

Participant I am a hard worker.

Facilitator Yes, you do work hard, but that’s not it either. Guess again.

Participant I am funny and I like to make people laugh.

Facilitator Yes! You are funny and you do make people laugh. You should feel good about having a gift for making other people happy.

Ask the participants to talk about how this activity made them feel. What effect did it have on their self-esteem to hear good things about themselves and to say good things about someone else and see their reaction?
Fill in the Blanks ................................................................ (Handout)

This fill-in-the-blank activity provides extra practise using words from the key word families of this session.

Participants who can fill in the blanks from memory can use the handout or you can write the following list on the board or flip chart for them to choose from.

self feel selves better Bag self-esteem bad day esteem praise builds

8 THINGS TO DO AT HOME

Ask the group to play the guessing game at home with their children and then write about it in their journals.

Go over the instructions using parent/child examples like the one given below.

“Think of something you like about your child — something that makes them really special. Play the guessing game and give them three chances to guess what it is. Each time they guess, repeat it and ask them to guess again. If they guess correctly, praise them (Good guess!) and start again.

For example:

Parent I know something special about you. Can you guess what it is?
Child I am a good runner.

Parent Yes, you are a very good runner, but that’s not what I’m thinking of right now. Can you try again?
Child I am a good brother.

Parent Yes, you are a very good brother, but that isn’t it either. Try one more guess.
Child I clean up my room.

Parent Yes, you do a good job of cleaning your room, but I was thinking that you are a good reader!

Also, ask the group what they would do if their child said there was nothing good about themselves and refused to play the game. Try to get the participants to come up with some ideas for how to handle the situation and only come in yourself if necessary. Remember to praise them for their good ideas and for being willing to help each other.
Finish up by asking, “How many good things will a child hear about themselves when you play this game with them? Do you think it will help to build their self-esteem?” Remind them that this is the type of simple game they can play with their children over and over again, maybe even making it a part of every day.

Parents might want to follow this activity by helping their child make their own Medicine Bag out of materials found around the house and sharing the Teachings they learned about Medicine Bags.

9 SUMMARY

Summarize by saying something like, “Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves and it is part of everyone, from the youngest child to the oldest person in our communities. When we feel bad, we can do things to help us feel better, to fill our Medicine Bag, to turn a bad day into a good day.

We need to take care of our own self-esteem so that we can take better care of our children. We need to know how we can help our children to improve their self-esteem as well because they are our responsibility and our future.”

Thank them for sharing their ideas and explain that everyone benefits when we learn new ideas from each other for building our self-esteem.

At the end of the Participants’ Handouts you will find a certificate for participants who have completed this session. You will need to personalize each one with your program name, the number of hours of instruction, the person’s name, your signature (or the Elder’s signature) and the date.

For participants who attend all eight sessions, there is a program certificate in the Appendix.
Participants’ Handouts

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**Session Certificate of Completion**
### Key Word Families

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<th><strong>self</strong></th>
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**Wow! Are you ever doing a good job!**

**Thank you mom!**
**Word Search 1**

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M Z D L G S O C A N P R V
E S A P R A I S E I B A Q
D B E H U E K T E A U E J
I M A L I P W O S B I N R
C S Y Q F E O C U P L A F
I D E F E E L I N G D O T
N A U L A O S A C L I M I
E W X F B I P T O H N Y W
C P A J O V A Q E A G C Z
B Y R X T U E J W E R K O
A H O I B S M D V K M X P
G U E S S I N G F G A M E
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- self esteem
- Medicine Bag
- building
- praise
- feeling
- guessing game
### Word Search 2

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**Hints:**
- bag
- guess
- day
- good
- game
- bad
- self
- feel
Making your Own Medicine Bag

Take the material you want to use and cut out a circle approximately 8 inches (20 cm) across. Turn it over so the good side of the material is facing up and decorate the outside of your bag with symbols or drawings of animals or leaves, whatever feels right in your heart.

After the outside of your Medicine Bag is decorated the way you want it, it is time to make your drawstring.

A Medicine Bag is usually worn around the neck with the bag resting close to your heart so you should measure a drawstring that works for you. Remember to allow some extra string to make sure you have enough to gather up the top of your Medicine Bag, tie it off and still go around your neck and be knotted.

To finish making your Medicine Bag, thread your drawstring into a needle and do an ‘in and out’ running stitch around the outside edge. Draw the long ends of your drawstring together so they are equal in length with the bag in the centre of the string.

Pull the ends of the drawstring until they are even, tighten up the gather stitches to form the bag and either loop the strings around the top of the bag or tie them off to secure the bag. Remember it must be easy to open and close as things are added or taken out. The last step is to tie the loose ends together and make sure it fits around your neck and is easy to get on and off. If necessary some extra string can be added to make it longer and any extra string can be cut off.

Before placing items in your bag take a moment to bless them and think about their meaning in your life and why you want to carry them with you in this way.
Self-Esteem
The Feeling We Have About Ourselves

Medicine Bag

What makes us feel good?

1

2

3
Write some words that tell how you feel on a BAD day:
Good Day

Write some words that tell how you feel on a GOOD day:
Turning a Bad Day into a Good one

What will help turn a BAD day into a GOOD day for you?
Building Self-Esteem in Our Children
Positive Messages for Our Children

I love you.

I’m proud of you.

I like to listen to you.

You did a good job.

You are a good reader.

Thank you for the smile.
Fill In The Blanks

_______-esteem is how we ______ about our_______.

When we feel bad, we can do things to help us feel ________, to fill our ‘Medicine _____,’ to turn a _____ day into a good _____.

We need to take care of our own self-________ so that we can take better care of our children.

When we tell our children they are good at something, and give them lots of ________, it ________ their _______ - ________.
Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that:

has successfully completed

Building Self-Esteem in Our Children

session of COMPLETING THE CIRCLE program with

Date: ____________________________________

Signature: ________________________________

The _____ hours of instruction in this session included training in these Essential Skills:

- Reading Text
- Document Use
- Writing
- Oral Communication
- Problem Solving
- Working with Others
- Continuous Learning
Step-by-step guidelines for raising responsible, productive, happy children. Self-image is your child’s most important characteristic. How to help create strong feelings of self-worth is the central challenge for every parent and teacher.

Bohnet, Jamie. **Thriving (not Just Surviving) Through The Teens!: For Dads Of Adolescents Ages 13-18.** Pleasant Word 2006

Strong self-esteem is a critical ingredient for human happiness and its development begins at home in the nurturing interactions between children and adults. Clarke’s unique approach to building self-esteem begins with her belief that this is indeed a family affair. Rather than offering a collection of dictatorial “shoulds”, Self-Esteem: A Family Affair instead serves as a source of parental support, providing a broad range of imaginative and effective suggestions for dealing with individual family members in ways that nourish self-esteem for all involved. Throughout her book, Clarke encourages parents to claim their strengths and to trust their judgment as they make decisions about appropriate child care. Recognizing, too, that kids’ needs are best met by adults whose own needs have not been neglected, Clarke offers a range of creative and workable options for parents to build the self-esteem of children while also caring for their own emotional needs.

Coloroso, Barbara. **Kids are Worth It: Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline.** Penguin Group Canada (2003)
“There are no quick fixes, easy answers, or recipes for parenting, but I believe most of us have the tools we need to be good parents if only we can find them.” By looking at the difference between encouragement and rewards, discipline and punishment, Coloroso helps parents learn how to empower and influence their children instead of controlling them by teaching them how to think, not what to think.

It’s the deadliest combination going: bullies who get what they want from their target, bullied kids who are afraid to tell, bystanders who either watch, participate, or look away, and adults who see the incidents as simply “teasing” and a normal part of childhood. We have only to look to the headlines to understand that this is a recipe for tragedy. Some bullying victims, their cries unheard, have fought back with violence that has devastated entire communities; others have committed suicide.

Coloroso, Barbara. **Just Because It’s Not Wrong Doesn’t Make It Right.** (2006)
We live in a world where children so often are given the message that the ends justify the means; where harmful, even violence — in families, in communities, and around the world — goes unnoticed, unmitigated, and often unrepented; where children’s ethical education can come from a T-shirt slogan or bumper sticker, an Internet site, or the evening news; where rigid moral absolutism or moral relativism has replaced true ethical thinking. In a world such as ours, Just Because It’s Not Wrong Doesn’t Make It Right is an essential tool.

In this companion to her bestselling “Kids are Worth It!,” parenting educator Barbara Coloroso shows how parents can help children find a way through grief and sorrow during the difficult times of death, illness, divorce, and other upheavals. She offers concrete, compassionate ideas for supporting children as
they navigate the emotional ups and downs that accompany loss, assisting them in developing their own constructive ways of responding to what life hands them.

Einon, Dorothy. Learning Early: Everything Parents Need to Encourage and Develop Their Child’s Learning Skills from Birth to Six Years of Age. Checkmark Books (1999)
Learning Early gives parents and caregivers a simple, easy-to-use guide for instilling a joyful sense of discovery in their children during the critical learning years from birth to age six. It includes activities that have specific benefits for nourishing their child’s curiosity and self-confidence.

Faber, Adele & Mazlish, Elaine. How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk. (1999) (Book or Audio Book on CD)
Children need support and understanding from their parents. This classic text, printed here in a special 20th anniversary edition, helps parents learn to achieve this. Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish offer excellent advice on coping with a child’s negative feelings, using different methods other than punishment to resolve conflict peacefully. ‘How to Talk so Kids Will Listen & Listen so Kids Will Talk’ has helped parents everywhere for two decades.

Through sample dialogues that clarify what to say and how to say it, the authors spell out proven ways to handle problems that interfere with learning in school and at home. Faber and company cover all the skills needed for effective learning — from encouraging children to cooperate to avoiding the pitfalls of punishment to offering praise and criticism that inspire a child to do his or her best.

End Those Power Struggles and Begin Connecting with Your Child. Noted family educator Mary Sheedy Kurcinka struck a national chord with her bestselling Raising Your Spirited Child. Now she hits upon another crucial parenting topic: coping with the everyday challenges of disciplining your child, while understanding the issues behind his or her behaviour.

“What are some of the discoveries I have made? I found I needed people because I needed the love they could give me. I found that love was something I did. I found that the way I showed people my love for them was to tell how it was with me in my deepest heart. I came to feel that was the most loving thing I could do for anyone — tell them how it was with me and share my imperfections with them. When I did this, most people came back at me with what was deep within them. This was love coming to me, the more I had to give away. I ain’t much baby...but I’m all I’ve got.” Lair originally wrote this book for his students, but when it gained widespread popularity he rewrote it for publication. It is a book meant to help people share in the success of finding themselves.

Learn to use physical activity to raise an emotionally well-balanced, more coordinated, and happier child “Parents and educators may underestimate the value of motor development during childhood. This book does much to fill a wide gap in understanding its relevance. Supplied with the practical content of these pages, parents can assist their children to savour an important form of mastery and gratification.”
— Mel Levine, author of A Mind at a Time

Lynn, Kathy. Who’s In Charge Anyway? Whitecap Books 2003
What do you do when your toddler throws a tantrum every time you go to the grocery store? How do you handle a teenager who wants to stay out all night? And how do you teach kids to be polite? Experienced parent and workshop leader Kathy Lynn has written a reassuring and helpful book for every
parent. Her underlying message is that parents play a key role in raising children with high self-esteem, solid character, and independence, but parents could use a little guidance too.

Now you can effectively parent your strong-willed child. Does your child constantly misbehave and ignore or refuse your requests for proper behaviour? Is your relationship with your child based on conflict instead of mutual respect and cooperation? With the help of this groundbreaking book, you can create a positive, respectful, and rewarding relationship with your child.

Nobody’s Perfect is a parenting education and support program for parents of children from birth to age five. It is designed to meet the needs of parents who are young, single, socially or geographically isolated or who have low income or limited formal education. Participation is voluntary and free of charge.

The gist of Phelan's simple, effective child-management program is to enable parents to discipline children, ages 2 to 12, by instituting a system of counting and time-outs, delivered straightforwardly and unemotionally.

Phelan, Thomas W. Surviving Your Adolescents: How To Manage & Let Go Of Your 13-18 Year Olds
This encouraging resource walks parents through the ups-and-downs of parenting adolescents, helping end the hassles and improve the parent-teenager relationship.

In these difficult, sometimes violent, times, how can we nurture children to be both good and happy? How can we help them stay safe, be respectful, and reach their full potential? Nurturing Good Children Now outlines precisely what is important to foster in our kids, and how to raise children who have a deep sense of values and an enthusiastic spirit. The most essential traits that children need to thrive in today’s world are: mood mastery, expressiveness, peer smarts, body comfort, team intelligence, respect, passion, focus, caution, gratitude. This compassionate book offers unflinching social commentary, the latest research on child development, and practical advice. We can protect our children’s sense of integrity. We can teach them to love learning; to hold onto their passion; to be comfortable with their bodies; to get along with their peers without succumbing to peer pressure; and to manage their emotions.

Children’s Resources & Books for Parents to Read to Their Children:

High Skills Literature — More complex language
Native American. A young boy and his grandfather reminisce about the boy’s birth, his first horse, and an exciting horse race. In this poignant story, the counting rope is a metaphor for the passage of time and for a boy’s emerging confidence in facing his blindness.

Low Skills Literature — Few simple words
Chickasaw tale. Baby rattlesnake cries and cries for a rattle just like his big brother and sister have, but his parents tell him he’s still too young. His crying keeps the Rattlesnake People up all night, so finally his parents give in. Thrilled with his new power, he mischievously uses his rattle to scare little animals. He grows bolder and bolder, till one day he scares the wrong creature. Adapted from a Chickasaw tale, this
English-only version of this story-time favourite provides a witty lesson in the value of self-control that all young can relate to.

Low Skills Literature — few simple words
Little Runner wants to play big boys’ games. He wants to wear old clothes and scary masks, just like them. But Mother thinks he’s too young, until clever Little Runner thinks of a funny trick to get what he wants.

High Skills Literature — More complex language
In the time before horses were differently coloured, they were all white, causing no end of confusion. In the story that Kate Buchholz tells, the Great Spirit, displeased with this situation, finds a way to make horses distinct from one another. It is the bond that grows between a young native girl, Breeze, and her horse, Tiana, that leads the Great Spirit to the way to make pinto ponies distinct among horses. How the Pinto Got Her Colour is very much about the love of Breeze for her grandfather, her people, and her horse; and the strength that love gives Breeze to overcome adversity. We all take for granted a child’s ability to read a storybook along with a parent, grandparent, sibling, or friend.

Medium Skills Literature — More words but still fairly simple
Navajo. Many who travel up the steep mountain of hope to dream a dream of power; a black bear, a white-headed eagle, etc. But what happens if a boy dreams of an acorn? The wise man tells the boy, “Be happy with your gift, and be at peace with your dream.” So the boy plants the acorn, waters it, gives it a stick for support, and sings to it. He realizes the power that something small can hold.

Hard Skills Literature — More complex language
Native American. Grandfather Four Winds introduces young Rising Moon to the sacred “Tree of Our People” to help him stop worrying about the future. Grandfather Four Winds and Rising Moon is a tale in the Native American tradition, a story of the interconnectedness of humanity and the natural environment and of the wisdom of a grandfather being passed on to his young grandson. A drought has come to the land that is home to Grandfather Four Winds and his grandson. Rising Moon is troubled by what he sees and tells his wise and loving grandfather of his concerns. “Rising Moon, because you are old enough to fret and worry you are old enough to pray.” Grandfather then tells Rising Moon an enchanting story from a time long past with a surprising and inspiring conclusion. Grandfather Four Winds and Rising Moon is a gentle reminder of the power of courage, gratitude, generosity, and faith — values found at the heart of all of the world’s great traditions. The book is illustrated by Sally J. Smith, whose evocative art makes graphic the belief of many native cultures that spirit exists in all of nature’s forms.

Low & Medium Skills Literature
Tsimshian legend. An old man’s sight is restored by Loon. He gives the bird his precious shell necklace as a reward. That is why the loon has a white collar and speckles on his back.

Hard Skills Literature — More complex language
Traditional Tale of the Skidi Pawnee Indians of the American Plains. There was once a poor boy who longed for a pony more than anything, so he made one out of mud. One night he had a dream that his pony was alive and speaking to him. When he awoke his mud pony had come alive. This story tells how the mud pony was with the boy when he was lost, when he fought for the buffalo and when he became chief. The mud pony returned to mother earth and would always be with him.
Cohlene, Terri. **Little Firefly an Algonquin Legend.** Mahwah, NJ: Watermill Press. (1990)

- **Hard Skills Literature** — More complex language
  This story is an Algonquin Legend that tells of a young girl, badly mistreated by her sisters. She eventually becomes the bride of the hunter known as the Invisible One. Reminiscent of the Cinderella story, this is the enchanting tale of a shy maiden who wins the heart of a great warrior despite her cruel and mocking older sisters. The Legends of the World opens readers' minds to the diverse cultures of Native America, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and the Americas through enchanting tales passed down through countless generations. Each book in the series features geographical, historical and cultural information. Illustrated in full colour.


- **Very Low Skills Literature** — Few simple words.
  Titch is the proverbial Little Kid. Everything about him is smaller and less impressive than his big brother and big sister. But his moment of triumph comes when his tiny seed grows into an awesome plant.


- **Low Skills Literature** — Few simple words.
  A little boy plants a carrot seed. His mother says, “I’m afraid it won’t come up”. His father and his big brother agree. At first, it seems they’re right. But the little boy knows better. So every day he pulls up weeds and waters the ground. Until one day, just as the little boy knew it would, something very special happens.


- **Very Low Skills Literature** — Few simple words.
  What we like is jumping about, giving a shout, going out. Join 6 different children as they take turns expressing their likes and dislikes. Young readers will delight in sharing the same preferences as other children and be inspired to reflect upon their own personal tastes. Full colour throughout.


- A cheerful cataloguing of the things many young children can do by themselves—such as tying their shoe, riding a bike and kicking a ball. Colour illustrations accompany the text.

McPhail, David. **Something Special.** Canada: Little, Broeon and Company Limited(1988)

- **Low Skills Literature** — Few simple words.
  Sam, who comes from a family of gifted and talented raccoons, sets out to discover his own special skill. Colour illustrations accompanying the text.


- A photo-essay about family around the world that stresses the universal bond of love. Little ones will enjoy this enlightening encounter with people from many cultures showing their love for each other.

Munsch, Robert. **Love You Forever.** Willowdale, ON: Firefly Books Ltd. (1986)

- **High Skills Literature** — More complex language.
  This is a great book for bedtime. No complicated plotline here, but this book is guaranteed to give both parent and child the warm fuzzies every time.


- **Very Low Skills Literature** — Few simple words
  One in a series of books featuring a little bear who pursues independent activities like getting dressed, eating lunch and going for a walk.

Watanabe, Shigeo. **I can build a House.** Great Britain: The Bodley Head. (1983)

- **Very Low Skills Literature** — Few simple words
  Bear perseveres until he finds just the right material for building the perfect house.

Low Skills Literature — Few simple words

Simon always wanted to catch a salmon. Then an eagle accidentally drops one in his tidal pool. Simon felt sorry for the salmon so he dug a channel for the salmon to swim in to the sea. The salmon was happy, Simon was happy. Simon wanted to continue fishing but not for a salmon.


Low Skills Literature — Few simple words

Cree. This is the story about a young boy who took his moccasins to school and the children wanted to know where he got his moccasins from. He said his “Kookum”, who used leather, who made leather by scraping and pulling and smoking deerhide from the coat of a deer that his dad killed.


Hannah’s mother calls her everything from “chickadee” to “funny monkey”, but never “Hannah”. This worries Hannah, but in the end, things are resolved nicely. Little Hannah is worried because every time something happens, her mommy has a different pet name for her. She keeps reminding her mommy that she’s not all these other names, but her mother just keeps coming up with ’em. What Hannah doesn’t realize is that her mommy is just being silly and fun and sometimes making light of situations to reassure Hannah that all is well. Mommy finally gives in and hugs Hannah and tells her that she really does know that she’s Hannah. Cute story, good illustrations. Shows kids that mommies can be silly too. We always enjoy reading this and my daughter always likes to do the “I’m not______, I’m Hannah!” parts.