



Good Medicine Bundle

DIGITAL LESSONS

OPERATION
PREVENTION

Traditional Native Fire Stories Can Teach Us About Emotions

Educator Guide

Elementary
School Bundle



Discovery
EDUCATION





Time

x4 60-minute class periods



Good Medicine Bundle

DIGITAL LESSONS

OVERVIEW

This Digital Lesson Bundle introduces students to the cultural value of fire for practical and spiritual use in American Indian/Alaska Native traditional ways of life. Students will read several Native fire stories, as well as learn about the cultural uses of fire to cleanse and protect. While fire can also destroy, its power, when managed, is a force necessary for mankind. This is similar to the emotions we experience. No emotion is bad; however, unmanaged emotions can cause us to make unhealthy decisions and feel out of harmony with the world around us.

As we realize more about the effects of trauma, current and historical, on our students, it becomes crucial that educators have access to instructional materials that support emotional and mental wellness for students. This Good Medicine Bundle shares knowledge about historical trauma in Native communities and how Native approaches to wellness and finding balance through the Medicine Wheel can help students become more self-aware of areas in which they need balance.

To support a holistic approach to wellness, you may choose to utilize other lessons from Operation Prevention on making healthy decisions and responsible uses of medication to connect student understanding of balance and wellness as a way to avoid reliance on opioids or other substances.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- ◊ Read and discuss traditional American Indian traditional stories about fire and its cultural significance.
- ◊ Identify how American Indians utilize fire for cultural traditions or needs.
- ◊ Connect the properties of fire to the effects that emotions have on the body.
- ◊ Define the difference between an emotion and a feeling.
- ◊ Analyze how learning about fire can help an individual better understand and manage emotions.
- ◊ Reflect on how their emotions can help and harm them and practice steps to manage emotions and feelings.

MATERIALS

Day 1:

- ◊ Handout 1: How the Flicker Bird Brought Fire
- ◊ Handout 2: Understanding our Emotions and Feelings

Day 2:

- ◊ Handout 1: About Emotions.pdf (jmu.edu)
- ◊ Handout 2: When Elk Brought Fire to the People
- ◊ Handout 3: How Emotions Affect Our Behavior
- ◊ Handout 4: Putting Our Learning Together

Day 3:

- ◊ Handout 1: How Native Americans Utilize Fire to Balance the Land
- ◊ Handout 2: Managing Our Emotional Fires
- ◊ Handout 3: Connect & Respond
- ◊ Handout 4: Reflect & Look Forward

RESOURCES

The Science of Emotion: [The Science of Emotion: Exploring the Basics of Emotional Psychology | UWA Online](#)
[How Do Emotions Work? Frontiers for Young Minds \(frontiersin.org\)](#)
[About Emotions.pdf \(jmu.edu\)](#)
[Managing-Emotions-Worksheet.pdf \(winona.edu\)](#)
[Teaching Strategy: See, Think, Wonder | Facing History](#)

NATIONAL STANDARDS

National Health Standards

- ◊ Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
- ◊ Standard 2: Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
- ◊ Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

National Core Arts Anchor Standards

- ◊ Creating Anchor Standard #1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- ◊ Creating Anchor Standard #2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Next Generation Science Standards

- ◊ ESS3.B: Earth and Human Activity: Natural Hazards
 - ◊ A variety of natural hazards result from natural processes. Humans cannot eliminate natural hazards but can take steps to reduce their impacts.
- ◊ LS1.D: Information Processing
 - ◊ Different sense receptors are specialized for particular kinds of information, which may be then processed by the animal's brain. Animals are able to use their perceptions and memories to guide their actions.

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

- ◊ Reading:
 - ◊ R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◊ Writing:
 - ◊ W.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- ◊ Speaking and Listening:
 - ◊ SL.1: 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.





Procedure



DAY 1

Slides 1–3: Title Slide, Objectives, and Essential Question

1. Introduce the lesson and discuss the topic and objectives with students. This lesson series will share traditional stories from American Indian tribes that teach us the cultural value of fire. Students will also connect how we each have our own fire (emotions) within us that can do good or harm, depending on how we manage our emotions and feelings.
2. If tribes or American Indian/Alaska Native students are not represented in your community, this may be an opportunity to ask students what they know about AI/AN peoples. Ensure that students understand there are many tribal communities thriving today.

Slide 4: Knowledge Check: What Do We Know About Fire?

3. Students can pair/share, or hold a quick whole-group share about what they know of the useful and harmful qualities of fire. If time allows, the teacher may also ask students if they know how a fire starts.

Slide 5: The Cultural Value of Storytelling

4. Ask students to raise their hand if they like reading or hearing stories.
5. Share that the “oral tradition” of telling stories is an ancient practice and that most Native peoples past and present use storytelling as a way of life.
6. Selected students can take turns reading the bullet points. Emphasize that stories were used to teach life values, as well as promote an understanding of nature and relationships to others. These stories were used to teach all, but especially children.
7. Direct students to look at the image. Briefly mention to students that many times stories are told in circles, so that everyone can hear and respect each other’s stories or reflections. The class will be using talking circles each day of this lesson series.



Slide 6: Traditional Fire Story: How the Flicker Bird Brought Fire

8. Ensure students have Handout 1: How the Flicker Bird Brought Fire. This is a story from the Eastern Shoshone tribal nation. They currently live in Wyoming. Shoshone comes from the word sosoni, which means “tall grass,” and refers to the material used to build their houses.
9. Read the text as a whole or small group. It is best if the teacher has anticipated stopping points where students will need vocabulary or comprehension support.
10. Allow students time to answer the reading response questions at the bottom of the story. This can be individual or partner share.
11. Select students to share their responses to each question and allow for additional discussion time. It is important to note that like other traditional cultures, these stories demonstrate the relationship with and value placed on animals and other natural elements. Stories like this were used to explain why animals look or behave in certain ways. They are also used to share why humans are to be thankful for nature, which is another cultural value of AI/AN people.

Slide 7: The Fire Triangle

12. This slide is to briefly explain what it takes for a fire to happen. This is an opportunity to introduce and teach the academic vocabulary term ignite. If students are already aware of this term, and how it can be used across multiple contexts, then simply ask students to share what they already know about the definition.
13. Discuss that this triangle shows that fire is a process that keeps fueling itself as it gets hotter. Because a fire needs oxygen, people use things like water, wet blankets, or foam to put out a fire, because those items can cut off the oxygen to a fire. If time allows, ask students if they have seen fires or firefighting in the news.

Slide 8: Our Emotions Are the Things That Ignite Us

14. Have students brainstorm and share aloud all the emotions they can list. Ask a student to share how he/she thinks emotions work.
15. Direct their attention to Handout 2: Understanding Our Emotions and Feelings. Prompt students to read the handout independently, and then prepare to discuss what they think the main idea of the article is.
16. Ask students aloud, “What information does the table at the top of the page provide for the reader?”
17. Ask one or two students to summarize what the article teaches about the difference between an emotion and a feeling. Help students understand the cyclical process of emotions leading to feelings, which also cause emotions to change or be affirmed.

Slide 9: Traditional Talking Circles

18. For lesson closure, have students stand in a circle around the room. This can also be done in smaller circles. Ensure that one student in the circle has the talking stick/object.
19. Pose the first question, “How can our emotions be helpful?”, and give several students time to speak. They should pass the talking stick as they answer or respond to others.

20. Pose the second question, “How can our emotions be harmful?”, and follow the same protocol. Remind students that only the person with the stick is to be speaking.
21. Bring the circle to a close by re-emphasizing that our emotions are important to us and that we should not be afraid of them. However, just like something as important as fire, our emotions can also cause us to feel ways that aren’t good for us. Sometimes, people might make bad decisions such as hurting others or trying drugs or alcohol. Tell students that tomorrow they will learn more about how our emotions affect our behavior.

Notes for the Teacher:

Talking Circles are an ancient and important part of many Native American communities. They are a simple and valuable way to communicate our feelings to a group, and in doing so, we form a respectful and compassionate community.

PROTOCOL: Sit in a circle and prepare to listen and share. The Talking Circle can be focused on any topic or issue. Each person has the opportunity to speak when they are holding the stick, feather, or other object used to identify whose turn it is to speak. The circle is complete when everyone has an opportunity to speak once, and most discussions have two or more opportunities for individuals to speak.

DAY 2

Slide 10: What Can Fire Teach Us About Our Emotions?

1. Have students begin class by independently reading Student Handout 1: About Emotions. Then, students can either pair/share or discuss the handout as a whole group. Some students may find this like their learning about primary and secondary colors. This can be a helpful comparison for younger students.
2. Then, ask one or two students to define the previous day’s key word: ignite. Tell students to listen for that word in our story today.

Slide 11: Traditional Story: When Elk Gave Fire to the People

3. As a class or in small groups, read the Eastern Shoshone story on Student Handout 2: When Elk Gave Fire to the People. Anticipate beforehand where students may need a comprehension check while reading.
4. Give students time to answer the reading response questions on the handout. If time allows, students can discuss their responses before answering the discussion questions.
5. The whole group discussion centers on how humans need fire to live. In current times, this translates into our use of heat and electricity. Have students reflect on how life may have been many years ago, and how fire was an essential and daily part of life. Stories like this one would demonstrate how grateful Native people were for fire, and how they gave thanks to nature for providing it.



Slide 12: How our Emotions Affect our Behavior

6. As you share Student Handout 3: How Emotions Affect Our Behavior, remind students that they are learning about fire to understand how our own emotions work in our bodies. Connect the reading from the prior lesson about how emotions are a physical response that turns into a brain response, in the form of thoughts and feelings. The article they read in this lesson will explain how emotions affect our behaviors and actions.
7. Choose how students will read the article. If students need comprehension support, this can be a whole-group read.
8. After reading, ask students to discuss the answers to these questions:
 - How do emotions lead to our behaviors?
 - Why might some people experience the same emotions, but act differently?
 - Have you ever been surprised at your reaction to something emotional?
 - Why do you think the author includes this sentence in paragraph 3 of the article “An important thing to remember is that emotions are not bad.”

By the end of the discussion, ensure that students understand the emotion cycle presented on this slide. Also, emphasize that emotions, like fire, are good and are here to be more helpful than harmful. But like fire, our emotions can also harm us if they cause negative thoughts and behaviors. Sometimes our thoughts can become so strong that we make poor decisions like trying drugs or alcohol.

Slide 13: Putting Our Learning Together

9. Provide students with Student Handout 4: Putting Our Learning Together. This is a way for students to independently summarize what they have learned so far about fire and emotions, as well as include their own knowledge and experience.

Slide 14: Talking Circle

10. Conclude the lesson with a Talking Circle. This aligns to the learning theme of American Indian cultural values, and will also help students understand how to engage with each other with respect.
11. This is a very important place to continue to emphasize that our emotions are natural and helpful to us as they can keep us out of danger and help us show others how we feel. However, when our emotions are not balanced they can cause us to try things or do things that we normally wouldn't. Though we may not be able to change our emotions easily, we can make decisions to change our thoughts and behaviors before they get out of control.

DAY 3

Slide 15: Traditional Uses of Fire Teach Us About Managing Our Emotions

1. Ask students to share with a partner something they have learned in this lesson series that has been new or interesting to them.
2. Then ask students how/if these lessons have made them think differently about their emotions. Allow time for sharing.
3. Emphasize that today's lesson will focus on managing our emotions. Check for student understanding of the word managing or management.

Slide 16–18: Teaching Strategy: “See, Think, Wonder”

4. As time permits, use the Teaching Strategy: See, Think, Wonder [Facing History](#) strategy. This can be done as a whole group with the digital images or printed and shared in small groups.
5. Have students share responses to each of the images. These reflect fire at various stages from controlled to raging. Students may wonder about the second image, which depicts cultural or prescribed burning. It is actually just as controlled as the first image, but students may not understand this practice. This is what they will learn about in the first reading today.

Slide 19: How Native Americans Utilize Fire to Balance the Land

6. This reading will further explain how cultural or prescribed burning is used to help with growth. Before reading, display the image on the slide. Ask students what they think is happening in the image. Allow for various student ideas, but do not let students know what is actually happening.
7. Provide students with Handout 1: How Native Americans Utilize Fire to Balance the Land. Give students time and support for reading.
8. Ask students to discuss the differences they notice between the pictures on the second page of the handout.
9. Return to the image on the screen and ask students to use what they learned in the article to rethink the picture. The man is intentionally causing and controlling the fire to burn off the brush that can catch fire later, and cause an uncontrollable forest fire. Then read the caption of the image: “Elijah Knight of the North Fork Mono tribe lights grass on fire as part of a broadcast burn, which is a controlled application of fire to fuels.”

Slide 20: Managing our Emotional Fires

10. Remind students that they have been learning about fire to better understand their emotions. Provide Handout 2: Managing Our Emotional Fires. Allow for time and support for student reading. Focus on the checklist and ask students how that can help them to change their emotional responses.
11. Then hand out the half-sheets from Handout 3: Reflect & Respond. This activity will help students make text connections and prepare for the final talking circle. If time allows, ask several students to share responses.



Slide 21: Talking Circle

12. To close out the lesson series, complete one last talking circle. As this asks students to reflect on all of their learning, this may take longer, or could take place in an additional class session.
13. Also, ask students to reflect on the use of the talking circle and how it could benefit their class to use it more often.
14. For students to have personal time to reflect on the lessons, send home Handout 4: Reflect & Look Forward as homework, or plan to complete it in another class session.

Extension Activities

Share images and information from the following articles on the Yurok tribe in California. The Yurok Cultural Fire Management Council works alongside other tribes such as the Karuk to assist local fire departments in prescribed cultural burning to help prevent forest fires and foster regrowth of forests. This is a current example how the cultural value and respect of fire is still used to bring balance and safety in nature. The article references them as “firelighters” rather than “firefighters.” These tribes also teach college students the cultural ways of fire management to maintain the beauty of the forests for the future.

The Guardian article: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/nov/21/wildfire-prescribed-burns-california-native-americans>

NPR.org article (with live motion images) “To Manage Wildfire, California Looks To What Tribes Have Known All Along” <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/24/899422710/to-manage-wildfire-california-looks-to-what-tribes-have-known-all-along>

DAY 1: Student Handout 1

How the Flicker Bird Brought Fire

By Dr. Shane Doyle, Apsáalooke Nation

This story comes from the Eastern Shoshone (shuh-show-nee) Nation of Central Wyoming. During the most ancient times, when humans and their animal relatives could still talk to one another, the people were the weakest and most pitiful of all the creatures. One day, all the four-legged animals had a meeting and discussed what they could do to help their relatives, the humans, survive the difficult year. The bears said, "The people need something extra because they have no fur to keep them warm, they cannot run fast or fly, and their stomachs are weak. Let us think of how we can help them." After a long meeting, the four-legged animals decided that they could only feel sorry for the pitiful people.

Then the birds began to talk about how they could support the limited people.

Two young brothers said, "Let us get some of that fire from the fireball in the sky and bring it back to them. They can use it to stay warm, cleanse the land, and cook their food." So, the brothers both flew as high as they could and tried to touch the sun. The first brother came close but burned his wings and came quickly back. The second brother decided to try, but burned the top of his head, and this pushed him back to towards the earth.

Seeing that they had learned their lesson, the large birds tried to do the same, but all failed, including the eagle, who burned his tailfeathers. The first two birds became known as the Red-Winged Blackbird and Yellow-Headed Blackbird. While the birds continued to talk about how they could get fire from the sun, one little bird spoke up and said, "You're doing it wrong, I'll show you how." The little bird then began to fly towards the sun, going faster and faster the closer she got, until she finally flew right past the sun, and then spun in an instant and shot back right through its center, bringing the hot flames under her wings and dropping them on the land to share with the human beings. The bird became known as the Flicker, and her bright red wings still show the mark of her bravery, skill, and generosity in risking her life so that people could survive.

The Eastern Shoshone people still tell this story, that reminds them to be thankful for their place in the natural world among their animal relatives, especially the Flicker.



Reader Response Questions:

1. Why did the humans in this story need fire? Why would this be important to tribes who lived a long time ago?

2. What lessons does the story teach us about how American Indians view the relationship between humans and animals?

3. How does this story explain some of the physical features or behaviors of animals like the Flicker bird?



DAY 1: Student Handout 2

Understanding Our Emotions and Feelings

Emotions	Feelings
Activate the body	Activate the mind
Physical response to something that happens around us	Mental response as a reaction to the emotion
Happens before a feeling	Caused by our emotions
Can be seen through a physical reaction	Can be hidden or controlled

Sometimes people use the words emotions and feelings to describe the same thing, but there is actually a difference. Emotions are the automatic response our bodies give to something that happens around us. Emotions may cause our bodies to change the way our blood flows or our muscles act. This is why we can feel hot, sweaty, cold, or shaky when we are experiencing an emotion. This also explains why some people jump or freeze when something scary happens.

Feelings are what follow the emotion in our body. These feelings are connected to our thoughts, and can be changed if we decide what to do with our feelings. Sometimes we may feel the emotion of being scared, but our feelings try to think brave thoughts to hide that we are scared. Emotions are a very healthy thing for our bodies because they help us respond to what is happening in our environment. Many times, we do not even know the emotion that we are having until we think about the feelings it is causing.

In fact, some people have different emotional responses because of positive or negative things that have happened to them. For example, one person who sees a dog walking down the street may have a happy emotional response because they have a pet at home. Another person may experience the emotion of fear because they or someone in their family was bitten by a dog. Each person then has feelings or thoughts that are caused by that emotion, and they must decide how they react to the dog. This process can sometimes happen so fast that people are surprised by their own reactions.



DAY 2: Student Handout 1

About Emotions

There are **8 primary emotions**. You are born with these emotions wired into your brain. That wiring causes your body to react in certain ways and for you to have certain urges when the emotion arises.

Here is a list of primary emotions:

Eight Primary Emotions:

- ◇ **Anger:** fury, outrage, wrath, irritability, hostility, resentment and violence.
- ◇ **Sadness:** grief, sorrow, gloom, melancholy, despair, loneliness, and depression.
- ◇ **Fear:** anxiety, apprehension, nervousness, dread, fright, and panic.
- ◇ **Joy:** enjoyment, happiness, relief, bliss, delight, pride, thrill, and ecstasy.
- ◇ **Interest:** acceptance, friendliness, trust, kindness, affection, love, and devotion.
- ◇ **Surprise:** shock, astonishment, amazement, astound, and wonder.
- ◇ **Disgust:** contempt, disdain, scorn, aversion, distaste, and revulsion.
- ◇ **Shame:** guilt, embarrassment, chagrin, remorse, regret, and contrition.

All other emotions are made up by combining these basic 8 emotions.

Sometimes we have secondary emotions, an emotional reaction to an emotion. We learn these. Some examples of these are:

- ◇ Feeling shame when you get angry.
- ◇ Feeling angry when you have a shame response (e.g., hurt feelings).
- ◇ Feeling fear when you get angry (maybe you've been punished for anger).

There are many more. These are NOT wired into our bodies and brains, but are **learned** from our families, our culture, and others.

When you have a secondary emotion, the key is to figure out what the primary emotion, the feeling at the root of your reaction is, so that you can take an action that is most helpful.

Article Reference:

James Madison University—Counseling Center (jmu.edu)

PDF Link: [About Emotions.pdf \(jmu.edu\)](#)



DAY 2: Student Handout 2

When Elk Gave Fire to the People

By Dr. Shane Doyle, Apsáalooke Nation

This story comes from the Eastern Shoshone Nation of Central Wyoming. They call themselves “The Bison Eaters.”

Long, long ago when the world was new, all the animals were able to speak to one another, including the humans. Back in those days, the humans paid attention and respected their animal relatives. People were weak and vulnerable compared to other animals. They needed the help and knowledge that their four-legged, winged, and finned friends could provide, just so they could survive in the cold and harsh world.

One day long ago, Badia, which is the Shoshone name for “elk”, was walking through the mountains and got a rock lodged in his hoof. The rock was a piece of flint and it was painful, so he tried to dislodge it by kicking it against a large boulder. When he kicked the flint, it created a spark that started a fire in a nearby tree. The fire burned and provided some coals for more fire. Badia saw this, but didn’t need the fire for his food, so he asked his brothers, the mice and weasels, if they wanted the fire. They said “No, our food doesn’t need to be cooked. We sleep in burrows to stay warm. You should ask the wolves and bears.”

So Badia went to the wolves and bears and asked them if they wanted the fire. The wolves and bears said, “No, we don’t need any fire to help us. We have sharp teeth and strong stomachs to eat anything, and we have thick hair over our bodies to stay warm in the winter. Maybe you should ask those pitiful two-legged ones. Their skin is bare, and their stomachs are weak. They could use the fire to cook their food and keep themselves warm during the long, cold winter nights.”

So that is how Badia brought the sacred gift of fire to his two-legged relatives. This ancient story reminds the Eastern Shoshone people to show gratitude and respect to the elk and the other animals who have contributed to the survival and welfare of human beings.



Reader Response Questions:

1. Who are the wolves talking about when they say, “ask those pitiful two-legged ones”?
What other words or phrases in the text help support your answer?

2. How does this story explain one way that fire is ignited?

3. Compare “When Elk Gave Fire to the People” to the story “How the Flicker Bird Brought Fire.”
What characteristics do the animals in both stories share?

4. What do both stories teach about the Eastern Shoshone cultural value of respect and gratitude for nature?



DAY 2: Student Handout 3

How Our Emotions Affect Our Behavior

Your emotions and feelings play a powerful part in how you act. Many times, they are the force that drives your behavior. When an emotion is triggered, there is a reaction in our body and our mind. The change in our body can be automatic. For example, if we experience anger, our brain changes things, and we may feel our heart beat faster or our lungs breathe harder. If you are sad, your eyes may fill with tears. Even your muscles can move automatically. If you are praised by your parents or teacher, your body may stand straighter or your face smiles.

Another result of our emotions is that they change our thoughts. For example, scientists have found that when people are sad, they will usually remember sad things from the past. If they are happy, then those will be happy memories. Another example is fear. When people feel scared, they will look around and think that other things may be dangerous too. When people feel happy or safe, they will see the things around them as safe.

Emotions also influence our behavior. Many times, we might act differently than we are used to because of emotions. For example, if you are angry with someone, you may want to yell at them or fight with them even if you care about them. If you are sad, your behavior may be to stay in your room or not talk to anyone. An important thing to remember is that emotions are not bad. They are in our bodies to help protect us, but we must also be aware that they can harm us. We may not be able to control our emotions. However, we can control our feelings and thoughts before they become behaviors. Sometimes, we must work hard to change how we behave or think about something so that the emotions we feel in the future will not be harmful. It sounds difficult, but there are ways to practice controlling our thoughts and feelings so that our emotions and actions help us.

For example, if something is happening at home that makes you feel sad, your classmates at school may notice that you are sad. While it is normal to feel sad, you do not want that emotion to take over your life. A healthy action would be to talk to someone like your teacher or a school counselor to help you understand your sadness. A negative action would be trying a pill or drug that your classmate says can make you feel better. If you take medicines that are not given to you by your doctor, they can be very dangerous to your body and only make your emotions worse.

Article Reference: <https://kids.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/frym.2017.00069>



DAY 2: Student Handout 4

Putting Our Learning Together



How can fire help us?

How can our emotions help us?

How can fire harm us?

How can our emotions harm us?



DAY 3: Student Handout 1

How Native Americans Utilize Fire to Balance the Land

By Dr. Shane Doyle, Apsáalooke Nation

My tribal nation, the Apsáalooke, also known as the Crow Indians, have always respected, appreciated, and utilized fire. Fire was used for basic needs like staying warm and cooking meat, but it was also used in other ways. Fire was used by Native people after they had a big bison hunt, as the smoke and burned grasses would chase away the bears, wolves, and other predators who would come to eat the slaughtered bison also. Burning the grass around where a hunt occurred would also fertilize the ground with ashes, and cause fresh green grass to grow back the next season, which would draw the bison and other animals to come graze on the pasture. Then they would be easier for hunters to find, so they could harvest their meat and hides.

Fire was used to clear out thick underbrush around chokecherry and other native wild fruit trees. The trees would grow bigger and stronger and berry pickers would be able to get closer to pick the berries during the late summer when the berries were ripe. Native people used fire to balance the land, because fires keep the ground from becoming too heavily covered with vegetation, and often just one type of tree. The traditional Native American ways of burning the land created greater diversity of plants and animals, and kept the streams healthy because excess trees were not taking water from the creeks to grow big and strong.

Knowing how and when to use fire on the land was extremely important, because fire can be dangerous. If it is out of control, fire can cause huge destruction. Having many little fires throughout the year is how the land stays balanced and healthy. When fires are not used to help with the land's renewal, a dangerous situation is created. Too much underbrush is like fuel. If it is not burned off with seasonal burning, the brush will eventually be ignited by lightning, or catch fire some other way. It will burn extremely hot and will be nearly impossible to put out.

Respecting the balance of nature, and understanding the important role that fire must play in the natural world, is much like understanding that our emotions can keep us balanced. We must respect, appreciate, and utilize them for our best interests, and the best interests of our loved ones. Experiencing emotions is a natural and normal part of life, and talking about our emotions helps us to gain a better sense of how to control and enjoy our feelings and state of mind.

In the Apsáalooke tradition we have a saying: Enjoy all things in this life. Even when we are sad and moved by negative emotions, we express those feelings through tears, and that's how we grow and learn resiliency* from our ability to be sad and move on.

***Resiliency** – the ability to recover quickly from difficult situations; to spring back into shape



What does the information from Dr. Shane Doyle tell us about the important role that fire plays in our natural ecosystem?



DAY 3: Student Handout 2

Managing Our Emotional Fires

It is important for us to understand our emotions because that will help us learn how to respond to them and manage our behaviors. Our emotions are there to help us navigate our environment, such as staying away from dangerous situations. Our emotions can also teach other people how to treat us better if they see us angry or sad. If we show someone happiness or excitement, that also teaches other people how to love or support us.

Sometimes, however, our emotions may be unhelpful. If we are scared to do something such as take a test, or try a new activity, this can keep us from being successful if we do not understand our fear. If we are sad for too long, it might make it hard for our friends to keep being our friends. Though it can seem hard to change our emotions, working on more positive emotions can help our bodies be stronger. We can also make better decisions when we try to understand our emotions and behaviors. Some people may call this **self-awareness**.

So how do we know if an emotion is helpful or harmful? How can we understand our emotions to help our thoughts and behaviors work for us? Should we always listen to our emotions?

Here is a suggested process that can help us manage our emotions better:

1. Identify what is causing the emotion. Is it something you have experienced before?
2. Identify what you are thinking about that emotion or the situation.
3. Think about the effects of your thoughts and actions. How did you feel and how did you respond?

These questions can help you think about your emotional process to make it better next time:

- ◇ Is this thought helpful? What is a more helpful thought?
- ◇ What would I tell a friend in this situation? (Perhaps follow this advice.)
- ◇ How do I know if what I am feeling is true? Did the person/event really mean to hurt me?
- ◇ Are there other reasons I may be feeling this emotion?
- ◇ Can I see this from another point of view?
- ◇ What is the best and worst possible outcome of this situation?
- ◇ Will I be okay if my thoughts and behaviors hurt others or myself?
- ◇ Is there anything I can do to fix this situation? If not, should I keep feeling this way, or just move on?
- ◇ Can I take a different action to make this situation better?

Article References

[Managing-Emotions-Worksheet.pdf \(winona.edu\)](#)

[How Do Emotions Work? · Frontiers for Young Minds \(frontiersin.org\)](#)



DAY 3: Student Handout 3

Connect and Respond

TEXT CONNECTIONS: How do the articles “How Native Americans Utilize Fire to Balance the Land” and “Managing Our Emotional Fires” help us understand how our emotions work?

What do both articles teach us about the importance of managing emotions?

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DAY 3: Student Handout 4

Reflect & Look Forward

Reflect on an emotion you have felt recently. What did you feel in your body? What were your thoughts?

How did you respond after feeling the emotion? Do you think that your response was harmful?

How could the list of questions in "Managing Our Emotional Fires" have helped you manage that emotion and response?

Think of an emotion or response that you want to change to be more helpful. Look back at the list of questions in "Managing Our Emotional Fires" to see if any of those can help. Write a goal statement (For example, *I want to practice not being scared when I see my grandma's dog or I want to practice not feeling angry when my dad asks me to clean my room.*).

I want to practice:

