Community Awareness: Kairos Blanket Exercise

Host: Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre - Laura Maracle

How do you “unlearn” a story that you thought was the truth your whole life?

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning experience that teaches the Indigenous rights history we are rarely taught. Participants take on the roles of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Standing on blankets that represent the land, they walk through pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. They are guided and drawn into the experience by a trained narrator. By engaging on an emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual level, the Blanket Exercise effectively educated and increases empathy and encourages collaboration.

Participants have an opportunity to debrief and de-role while experiencing a talking circle. Teachings of the talking circle are provided to all participants and the facilitator will guide them through discussion. Everyone in the circle is provided a safe environment to release any emotions and/or reflections experienced within the Blanket Exercise.

This module is intended to be one and a half to two hours in length depending on the size of the group. The Blanket Exercise itself requires forty-five minutes and the talking circle usually requires 1.5 to 2 hours in length.

Outcomes

1. Learners will gain a better understanding of the historical, political and cultural issues that impact the health of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.
2. Learners will understand the connection between the historical and current government practices and policies towards First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples and the related impacts on their social determinants of health, access to health services and intergenerational health outcomes.
3. Participants will learn and participate in a healing/talking circle to help unburden and process emotional feelings that may arise from this exercise.

Other Resources

- www.queensu.ca/fdasc
- http://activehistory.ca/2017/08/150-acts-of-reconciliation-for-the-last-...
- https://next150.indianhorse.ca/challenges/94-calls-to-action