



# NATIVE GAMES HANDBOOK

2015 MTUPP Regional Meetings



# Native Games

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Games, from all cultures, are used as learning tools for survival. They build skills. As society norms and expectations shift so does the purpose of the skill learned from a game. Oftentimes the skill can be reapplied for a new reason and benefit. Traditionally, Native games fostered sportsmanship and respected all levels of skills. The games held a place of honor in community and had many levels of protocol. **Why play Native Games in public health/prevention arena:**

1. Increase physical activity; especially in a time when children are less physically fit than their parents.
2. Empower individuals - increase self-worth, resiliency, and cultural identity; Native Games help Indian people to connect with their cultural heritage, preserve their traditions and relearn who they are, where they came from, and what they believe.
3. Develop perceptive reasoning; participants learn to interpret and respond to different situations and surroundings.

**As in any “lesson” it is good to allow participants to share their “take-away” or their understanding of how it connects to life and, in our case, to commercial tobacco prevention.**

**What** – What was the game, how do you play, how did you like it, what skill did you learn?

**So What** – Why is this important, how does it apply to your life, how is the skill important to you? Can it improve your world or can you use the lesson to change your world?

### **How to access Native Games?**

Partner with your local school. OPI has trained teachers across the state in Native Games. Consider adding a prevention twist to the activity. Or contact the nearest American Indian Tobacco Prevention Specialist to join you at your next activity. For contact information link to <http://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/mtupp/americanindian.aspx>.

## Games of Agility

Games of agility increase physical fitness.

Traditionally these games kept members fit. They increased members' ability to maintain a strenuous lifestyle, such as participate in hunts, gather plants, join in nomadic life, and escape from potential danger.

These games are often cooperative, and have no specific boundaries or team sizes. All members of a community can play, young to old with as few or as many participants as are available. Variations are made to incorporate all levels of skill and physical prowess.

## **Agility – Doubleball: Lessons to be Learned Today...**

Doubleball participants must work as a team. Skills learned are cooperation, strength, endurance and strategy.

Discuss physical issues, healthy heart and lungs juxtaposed with commercial tobacco use.

Provide a lesson on traditional tobacco use and protocols. Understand how this use of tobacco differs from commercial tobacco use, habitual and addictive.

Discuss the Native American Circle of Wellness. Use the MTUPP American Indian reACTivism to understand how commercial tobacco affects all areas of our wellness.

## **Games of Accuracy –**

Games of accuracy hone and perfect a desired skill.

Traditionally these games honed hunting skills and strategies for survival.

These native games help an individual become more skilled in tasks of daily living and ultimately of greater use and value to their community. The games illustrate individual and societal responsibility and tactics. They help an individual observe their surroundings and their role and impact in the world.

## Accuracy - Make the Stick Jump: Lessons to be Learned Today ...

Participants aim at three sticks placed farther and farther away. The three sticks represent Prairie Grouse. Participants obtain points for hitting the sticks and “bringing home the dinner.” The further the stick the greater the points as the farthest stick as it is more difficult to hit and takes greater skill.

The three sticks can represent individual or societal challenges and issues. For example, in Public Health and tobacco use prevention:

- Closest stick – represents an individual decision to quit tobacco and call the Quit Line (lesser impact for societal change)
- Middle stick – represents local ordinances, laws and policies (a little harder but greater impact for change)
- Farthest Stick – represents Federal Mandates (controls industry tactics, marketing and availability for greatest impact)

## Games of Intuition

Games of Intuition increase mental acuity, observation and memory. This includes understanding odds and probability.

These games sharpen an individual's ability to interpret surroundings, understand external influences, and develop an increased awareness of an opponent. This game relies on gut responses that have been refined over time and are improved with practice and by a keen sense of observation.

These games are played against an opponent, one on one or in teams.



## **Intuition - Hand Game: Lessons to be Learned Today...**

Participants choose which hand hides the marked stick. If correct they receive a counting stick for their team. Play alternates between teams and concludes when one team has all the counting sticks.

This game can help illustrate tobacco company marketing tactics and how to avoid being duped. Ultimately your choice matters.

As a young person, you have to understand how to operate in today's world in order to survive. You need to know you are being targeted by companies to get your loyalty and money. You need to observe and understand how they are doing this through marketing. You need to be media literate and you need to realize that your opponent (the tobacco industry) is studying you as well.

# NOTES