Increasing Cultural Congruence Among Nurses in Wisconsin

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UW-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health
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Goal: Improve the quality of nursing care for American Indian (AI) patients in Wisconsin

Approach: Series of talking circles that included AI patients and nurses from tribal clinics.
Results

• Nurses from all sites reported increased awareness of racial privilege & discrimination, and knowledge of American Indian culture.
• Talking circles affected cognitive and emotional processes associated with nurses’ attitudes and behaviors.
• The central process involved bridging cultural gaps by building relationships.
• Relationship building and cultural understand were facilitated by:
  – Meeting multiple times
  – Emphasizing listening
  – Sharing personal experiences
  – Embedding interactions in cultural rituals
  – Meeting in an informal, relaxed setting outside of the work place
• American Indian patients and nurses recommended continuing the talking circles for whole clinics.