NUTRITION AND PRIMARY FOOD

Meeting Opening

Refer to How to Start a Study Group for basic suggestions.

Sample Opening: The intention of today’s meeting is to have us meet and connect with one another and to foster a space for support. We will discuss core IIN nutrition concepts, including primary food and the nutrition theories we have learned so far in the curriculum.

Introductions/New and Good

Invite each group member to share their name, location, and something new and good.

Overview and Discussion of Core IIN Nutrition Concepts

Review the following concepts as a group and discuss your experiences with each. If someone has a question on any of these concepts, ask the group to answer.

Primary Food: Primary food is all the elements of life that nurture you but don’t come on a plate. These areas of life have a big impact on your health and happiness. You can use the Circle of Life – personally and with clients – to identify which areas need attention and improvement. The twelve areas on the Circle of Life are: creativity,
finances, career, education, health, physical activity, home cooking, home environment, relationships, social life, joy, and spirituality.

Bio-Individuality: “One man’s food is another man’s poison.” Nutritional needs, amount of calories, and personal preferences vary from one person to another, and these needs can change for an individual over time.

Crowding Out: Crowd out cravings and unhealthy eating habits by adding in more healthy foods and beverages. For example, don’t deny yourself coffee in the morning. Instead, drink two cups of water beforehand and see if your body really wants that cup of coffee.

Deconstructing Cravings: Cravings can often be attributed to a nutrient deficiency or a primary food deficiency. A common example is sugar, which gives an immediate boost of energy and a release of endorphins. A client who is craving sugar may not be getting enough sleep or perhaps their craving is related to a sad emotional state.

Writing Exercise – Primary Food

Having well-balanced primary food is essential to your overall health and happiness. Most people don’t have a perfect Circle of Life and might have a few areas that are unbalanced. Take 10 minutes to free write responses to the following questions, then take five minutes to hear responses from 2–3 volunteers.

• What are the top three areas of the Circle of Life that you need to work on?
• How can you improve these three areas?
• What are three action steps you can take in one of the areas by the end of the month? They can be as small as cooking one more meal a week at home or as vast as exercising daily for 30 minutes.
At this point in the curriculum you have heard from several nutrition and wellness experts whose theories are diametrically opposed. Nutrition is an ever-evolving field, and often today’s fad diet is tomorrow’s “food to avoid.” One thing all our visiting teachers have in common is an emphasis on reducing the amount of processed food you consume. Choose your favorite visiting teacher so far and share what you like about their theories and any questions or comments that may come up.

How was the meeting helpful?

• Encourage everyone to experiment with their diet this month to see what works and doesn’t work for them.

• Reiterate visiting Facebook to make more connections.