

The Wakanheza Project[©] Principles

Saint Paul - Ramsey County Department of Public Health

www.co.ramsey.mn.us/ph

Judgment

While judgments can be useful and necessary in our daily lives, they can sometimes limit our ability to understand situations. When our judgments create barriers in understanding, we learn there are appropriate times to set judgments aside. This is especially true when we witness times of stress for children, youth and families. Setting aside our judgments will allow us to be able to help out in preventing or diffusing difficult situations.

Culture

While culture is expressed in many ways and can help us to understand one another, we must avoid allowing perceived differences to become barriers to communication and acceptance.

Powerlessness

Violence is the misuse of power against others, yet it typically arises out of a sense of powerlessness on the part of those acting out, often against those they care about the most. Our responses to, and actions to prevent violence can be more effective when we try to understand the sense of powerlessness people often feel in moments of tension.

Empathy/Respect

Treat others as you want to be treated. It's important to show respect in all situations. Youth deserve respect. Use empathetic understanding and act with respect and compassion. Try not to impose your own experiences by saying, "I remember when I was your age," but do try to reflect back to when you were a teen and do your best to walk in the shoes of youth.

Environment

People tend to respond very well to welcoming environments. We have the opportunity and obligation to create these environments, both individually and collectively.

The Moment

The Wakanheza Project is built upon suspending judgment, rejoicing in culture, understanding the impacts of powerlessness and environment, and practicing respect and empathy in the moment. We cannot be sure what happened before, or what will happen next, but we can decide to positively help out in the moment.