Building Collective & Cohesion in Tribal Youth Circle
Peacemaking

Kris Miner Schweigert, Circle Spaces
Erin Thin Elk, Tribal Youth TTA Center
OPENING IN A GOOD WAY....

In the Circle Way: Teachings of the Spirit

- Know that you are Sacred
- Know that you are Honored
- Know that you are Prayed for
- Know that Others gave offerings in your behalf
- Know that you are Not Alone
- Know that you were Known before you came to this place
- Know that you have Choices
- Know that you have a Name
- Know that many know your Name
- Know that when you reach, you are also reaching toward others

Indian Country Child Trauma Center
University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center
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AGENDA

INTRODUCTION OF PRESENTERS

SESSION DESCRIPTION

BUILDING COLLECTIVE & COHESION IN TRIBAL YOUTH CIRCLE PEACEMAKING
  BEING TRAUMA INFORMED...BEING A GOOD RELATIVE

CIRCLE PEACEMAKING EXPERIENTIAL GROUPS

QUESTION/ANSWER

CLOSING
Circle Peacemaking can be an effective prevention tool for schools and community-based tribal youth programming to promote understanding, build relationships, and repair harm. When working with youth, it is important to promote interconnectedness and agency.

Participants are invited to learn two foundational Restorative Justice Peacemaking Circle elements, collective experience and group cohesion. Key to these elements are values and storytelling.

This session will provide participants with both theory and understanding, as well as experiences to build upon and duplicate with youth. The experiential session includes time in peacemaking circle and requests participants share a story to build connection.
Seven Core Assumptions
Circle Forward & Heart of Hope
By: Carolyn Boyes-Watson & Kay Pranis

- The True Self in Everyone Is Good, Wise, and Powerful
- The World is profoundly Interconnected
- All Human Beings have a Deep Desire to be in a Good Relationship
- All Humans Have Gifts & Everyone Is Needed for What They Bring
- Everything We Need to Make Positive Change Is Already Here
- Human Beings are Holistic
- We Need Practices to Build Habits of Living from the Core Self
Peacemaking Circles Elements

- Ceremony
- Values
- Storytelling
- Stages
- Talking Piece
- Keeper
- Consensus
Overarching beliefs

We are reclaiming our old wisdom and traditional healing ways that have been lost or misplaced.

Trauma-Informed Care is not new to Indian Country.

As Indigenous people we have always participated in ceremony to either prepare for an hard event or use ceremony after a hard time, or offered ceremony to express gratitude to process trying times in order to affirm growth, support healing, and build resiliency.

TRAUMA WAS USUALLY RESOLVED.
Trauma in Indian Country

What is Trauma?
“A unique individual experience associated with a traumatic event or enduring conditions, which can involve an actual death or other loss, serious injury, or threat to a child’s well-being, often related to the cultural trauma, historical trauma, and intergenerational trauma that has accumulated in American Indian and Alaska Native communities through centuries of exposure to racism, warfare, violence, and catastrophic disease.” (BigFoot, Willmon-Haque, & Braden, 2008)

Historical & Intergenerational Trauma:
“The collective emotional and psychological injury both over the life span and across generations, resulting from a history of genocide.” (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2010)

Historical Grief:
“Grief resulting from the historical trauma of genocide, grief that has not been expressed, acknowledged and resolved. Like trauma, it can span across generations.” (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2010)
Another Way to View Trauma
Informed Care:
Being a Good Relative

- Generosity
- Choice
- Accountability
- Confidence
- Support
- Openness
- Acknowledgements
- Safety
- Reassurance

- Water
- Song
- Hope
- Connectedness
- Good Words
- Prayers
- Welcome
- Spirit Blessing
- Caring
Guiding Values & Principles

Trauma-Informed Principles

A trauma-informed approach reflects adherence to six key principles rather than a prescribed set of practices or procedures. These principles may be generalizable across multiple types of settings, although terminology and application may be setting- or sector-specific:

◆ Safety
◆ Trustworthiness and Transparency
◆ Peer support
◆ Inclusiveness and shared purpose
◆ Collaboration and mutuality
◆ Empowerment
◆ Voice and choice
◆ Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

(SAMHSA, 2014)
Circle Connections with Tribal Youth

Where do you already experience circles in your life?

What is helpful about these circles?

Where would you like to see circles in the community?

Where in life could you have used circles?
Building Collective & Cohesion

- Contributes to safe space
- Recognizes value of values
- Evokes Sacred, importance
- Taps into collective & individual wisdom
- Collective agency (personal-proxy-collective)
Social Ladders

- Skilled Academically Athletic: 15%
- Average, consistent: 70%
- Struggle academically: 15%
- Less emotional regulation: 15%
One Heart....Many Minds
The Circle Way Circle
QUESTIONS?
CLOSING IN A GOOD WAY...
Thank you for dedication to our children, youth and families! Pilamayaye (Thank you)