Transformative/Restorative Justice from an Indigenous Perspective

Walking in Balance with All Our Relations

Strong Oak Lefebvre
Visioning B.E.A.R. Circle Intertribal Coalition
“The dominant culture creates scarcity and promotes abuse of power. We are taught that there is always someone who has control over you and your needs. But if we value and practice interdependence—if we do not objectify anything or anyone—we will not objectify children or commit violence. Every person has the same value and worth. If we believe this—if we teach our children to see their value and importance to the larger community and the world—they will learn harmony and respect, and violence against human beings and Mother Earth will disappear.” Strong Oak Lefebvre
Historical trauma is entirely different than consciously holding onto the past when it resides in your ancestral memory and DNA. It results in numerous defense mechanisms, developmental malfunctions, and behavioral issues. This is scientific and is supported in studies.

~Tony Ten Fingers/Wanbli Nata'u, Oglala Lakota
Building Cultural Bridges
Undoing the historical trauma of the past
Prevention and Intervention

- Culturally designed primary prevention curriculum
- Circles of support for restoring community to wholeness
Circle Process

• Democratic
• Non-hierarchical
  • Listening
  • Healing
• Transformative
• Decolonizing
• Way of life
Seek solutions

Introductions

Identify issues

Build Trust
Walking in Balance Teaching Modules

- Peace and Justice: true democracy, environmental justice, economic justice and gender equity
- Respect
- Balance
- Courage
- Humility
- Compassion
- Empathy
- Wisdom
- Sacredness/prayer/vision quest/reverence/faith
- Connection to the land
- Generosity
- Gratitude
General Flow of Circles

Welcome
Opening
Introduce Talking Piece
Check in/Reflection Round

Closing Question
What, if anything, moved you, surprised you, transformed you?

Topic Introduction

Teaching Rounds
It’s All About Relationships

Musica Franklin after school program Leyden Woods, Greenfield, MA
Community Circles to Promote Safety

Training Youth Leaders in Circle Process
Community Circles to address drug abuse, presence of gangs, school suspensions
Circle to address conflicts between residents and to address incidents of harm
Youth and caregiver community garden plots
Community leaders involved in curriculum development of prevention curriculum
- Treat Mother Earth, plants, and animals like they have the same rights as human beings
- Engage in relationships based on reciprocity with all beings.
- Relate to others based on empathy and compassion.

**Cultivate compassion, empathy, reciprocity, and respect in all our relations to Mother Earth and all beings.**

- Frame harm and violence in ways that account for their systemic aspects.
- Issue broad invitations for participation in the program.
- Engage in community, relationships, and program development in ways intended to prevent violence.

- Support others to identify their truths and have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.
  - Communicate needs and desires around intimacy and other interpersonal activities or encounters.
  - Make space for the most marginalized voices to be heard.

- Facilitate connection between people and among people, Mother Earth, and all other beings.
  - Interrupt harm with healing intent for all involved.
  - Work through conflicts with courage and honesty.
  - Listen to others without interrupting or judging them.
  - Create spaces and opportunities to decrease isolation of people from each other and other beings.

- Uphold the perspective that harm can be healed and prevented, that it is not inevitable or [irreparable].
CONSENSUS

FAIRNESS
EQUALITY
COOPERATION
CONTRIBUTION
COLLABORATION

CREATING LEADERS
**COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY**

Create and affirm **VALUES & PRACTICES** that resist abuse and oppression and encourage safety, support, and accountability.

Provide **SAFETY & SUPPORT** to community members who are violently targeted that RESPECTS THEIR SELF-DETERMINATION.

Commit to ongoing development of all members of the community, and the community itself, to **TRANSFORM THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS** that reinforce oppression and violence.

Develop sustainable strategies to **ADDRESS COMMUNITY MEMBERS’ ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR**, creating a process for them to account for their actions and transform their behavior.