

Reintegration Approaches

Healing for Native Youth involved in Justice System



**TRIBAL YOUTH
RESOURCE CENTER**

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▶ WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING



OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



*Wicahcala na
Winuhcala Ota Pi
Kte* – there will
be many Elders
who are dear and
treasured sources
of strength



▶ OUR TIME TOGETHER



1. Discuss culturally relevant diversion and reintegration approaches relative to Native youth in Justice System
2. Share culturally-based strategies for reintegration and to reduce recidivism

▶ WOTAKUYE (KINSHIP)

“It’s relationships, not programs that change children...Young people thrive when adults care about them on a one-to-one level, and when they have a sense of belonging to a caring community.”

Bill Milliken, Communities in Schools (CIS) Founder (from Restorative Practice Toolkit, Finger Lakes Community Schools),
<https://www.flxcommunityschools.org/practices-toolkits>



C'EKIC'EYA

- Appealing to one another with humility, honor and respect
- Using Indigenous language kinship terms as way to engage youth
- Using the concept of Indigenous kinship worldview to establish and sustain a respectful relationship



OINAJIN TOPA/FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

CENTERING OUR YOUTH AS A RELATIVE ON A JOURNEY

Elder role includes providing teachings; ensuring social/custom/spiritual order

Return to Spirit World

Age 50+

Establishes own family; begins process of passing on teachings

NAGI YATA (spirit world)

Pre-Birth +

PRE-BIRTH: Singing to unborn baby; mother is not exposed to anything negative; family and extended family looks out for mother and unborn baby.

lowicayujuntapi/cleaning of mouth by Grandmother; Path predicted for baby; Lakota name given soon after birth

Age 12+

Isna Ti Awicalowan Pi; Wicasa Ihuni Pi – Rites of Passage for Girls and Boys

Age 21+

WOTAKUYE (Kinship) – FOUNDATION OF LAKOTA SOCIETY

E. Iron Cloud-Two Dogs, 2010

▶ CHALLENGES OUR YOUTH INHERITED AND EXPERIENCE

- Historical traumatic events (massacres, violation of treaties, negative boarding school experiences, federal policies designed to assimilate; land theft; federal relocation program; outlawing spiritual/ceremonial practices)
- Current traumatic events (history of traumatic experiences and/or exposure to trauma)
- Disconnection from or rejection of cultural lifeways
- ***It does not excuse behavior, but helps to explain it!***

OINAJIN TOPA/FOUR STAGES OF LIFE INTERRUPTED JOURNEY

FEW ELDERS TO PASS ON TEACHINGS OR KEEP SOCIAL/CUSTOM/SPIRITUAL ORDER

Death/males – 45-50;
Females – early 50's

Living on the streets;
alcoholism/drug addiction; prison

NAGI YATA (spirit world)

Pre-Birth +

Interruptions begin (e.g. abandonment, sexual abuse, trauma at age 3)

Age 12+

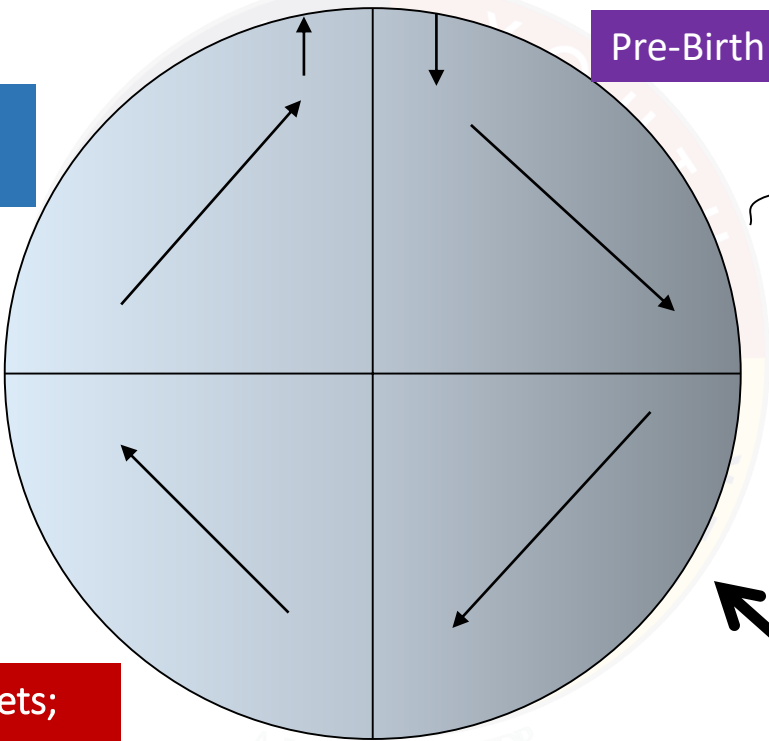
Arrests; Involvement in Juvenile Justice System; Suicide Attempts/completion

Age 21+

Return to Spirit World

Age 50+

WOTAKUYE – WEAKENED IN CONTEMPORARY LAKOTA SOCIETY



▶ YOUTH INCARCERATION

- Youth incarceration declined 70% between 1995 and 2019
- However, once youth were referred to the juvenile justice system, incarceration and/or detention rates remained high, especially for Black and Native American youth in 2019
- Public systems confined more youth for relatively minor offenses than for serious ones in 2019
- Black and Native American youth were far more likely to be confined than Asian and Pacific Islander, white or Hispanic youth in 2019

<https://www.aecf.org/resources/youth-incarceration-in-the-united-states>

SERVING JUSTICE-INVOLVED YOUTH AT HOME

- MENTORING

OJJDP awarded more than \$1.2 billion in grants to mentoring organizations in FYs 2008 to 2021, including \$89.4 million for programs and services in FY 2021.

Youth need to know they matter to the people in their lives. A long-term, genuine relationship with a trusting adult can help a young person develop self-confidence, set goals, and make informed life decisions.

“Our young people can move beyond mistakes they made in the past. It’s our job to provide services and opportunities offering the support and guidance they need to choose better. And the best places to do that is in the communities they call home and with their families.”

Liz Ryan, OJJDP Administrator

INCARCERATION IS NOT THE ANSWER



Providing opportunities for justice involved youth in their communities to repair any harm they have caused and rebuild relationships can be more effective than incarceration. Reconnection to community, culture and lifeways is critical for rebuilding values and increasing their sense of “who they are, that they belong, and that they have worth.”

▶ WHAT IS DIVERSION

- Diversion includes decisions, programs, or services to, under certain circumstances, steer youth away from formal processing in the juvenile justice system.
- The decision to use diversion instead of judicial proceedings can be made by law enforcement officers, educators, prosecutors, judges, or other court staff, depending on the jurisdiction.

- It costs an average of \$588 per day to incarcerate a young person; alternatives like diversion can cost approximately \$75 a day

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/diversion-in-the-juvenile-justice-system.aspx>

EXAMPLES OF DIVERSION ACTIVITIES

Mainstream

1. Writing a letter of apology
2. Informal adjustments – regular meetings with family and probation officer to gauge progress
3. Community Service

Culturally-Based

1. Talking Circles
2. Involvement in ceremonies – e.g. Purification Lodge ceremonies and other ceremonial/cultural responses
3. Cultural community service – e.g. assisting an Elder, helping with cultural events
4. Youth Crisis Intervention Center, Winnebago Tribe

▶ RESEARCH

“Diversion is more effective in reducing recidivism than conventional judicial interventions.”

The Effect of Youth Diversion Programs on Recidivism: A Meta-Analytic Review

Wilson and Hoge, 2013)

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0093854812451089>

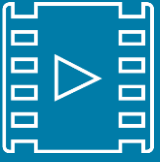


▶ WHAT IS REINTEGRATION?

- Also termed “Reentry,” a process for re-entering the community for those who have been incarcerated in prison or detained in juvenile detention.

▶ REINTEGRATION EXAMPLES

- White Bison's Warrior Down programming for relapse and recidivism prevention and recovery support; with focus on healthy reintegration into family and community
- Akwesasne Youth Reintegration Program provides support and supervision of youth on probation and/or community supervision
- Heal for Reentry program, Tacoma, WA



VIDEO: UNITY NATIVE YOUTH TOWN HALL FINDINGS: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (13:56 MIN)



“NATIVE YOUTH VOICE THEIR CONCERNS ABOUT THE FOCUS OF PUNISHMENT ON JUVENILE OFFENDERS RATHER THAN REHABILITATION OR WHAT IS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS A “HEALING JOURNEY.”





IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS OF NATIVE YOUTH

HOW MANY STRENGTHS CAN YOU IDENTIFY IN THIS YOUTH?
(FICTITIOUS)

Toska (nephew) has skipped class numerous times, he often recruits other youth to skip with him; he has stolen a car in the past, he is often loud, dominating when in a group, tends to show off; he doesn't turn in homework/assignments and falls asleep in class as he doesn't get much rest at night, due to taking care of younger siblings while his parent works.

HOW CHALLENGING IS IT TO “REFRAME” THESE BEHAVIORS/ATTITUDES AND TO USE THEM TO “TRANSFORM” APPROACHES TO ENGAGE YOUTH?

STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE NATIVE YOUTH

- Healing Ceremonies, Naming ceremonies for strengthening cultural identity
- Restorative Practices –Talking Circles, Family Mapping
- Community/family integration – e.g. Elders in the classroom and in every program
- Prevention, intervention and healing informed activities
- Communication approach to include relational worldview – use kinship terms

▶ TRADITIONAL CULTURAL HEALING EXAMPLES

- Wiping of Tears Ceremony for addressing grief
- Purification ceremony to address spirit of trauma
- Healing ceremonies for the wound in the spirit
- Equine assisted healing activities
- Healing camps
- Assisting youth to obtain a spirit name

▶ RETURN CULTURE TO THE CENTER TO ENHANCE
HEALING FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES
EXAMPLES OF LAKOTA CUSTOM LAW

Igluwas'te - Making amends for the wrong, injury or crime in a culturally appropriate way

Ihakickta Pi - Always look out for others

Ohunkesni - Always look out for the vulnerable (children, elders, those with disabilities, those with illnesses)

Wakun ki Wicayuonihan Pi - Listening to and respecting the elders; blessings from Elders

Wakanyeja ki Wakan Pi - Children are sacred, treating them as such.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW, HEARING WHAT YOU HEARD TODAY, IDENTIFY SOME **ACTION** STEPS THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO PREVENT NATIVE YOUTH FROM BEING INVOLVED WITH THE JUSTICE SYSTEM.*

KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW, HEARING WHAT YOU HEARD TODAY, WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES THAT CAN HELP NATIVE YOUTH WHO ARE CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM TO STAY OUT OF THE SYSTEM?



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RESOURCE CENTER

www.TribalYouth.org

**Closing Wocekiye
(sending our
voice to Creator)**

**PILAMAYA YE
THANK YOU**

