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DECOLONIZATION IN YOUR HEALING TO WELLNESS PROGRAM

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▶ DISCLAIMER

This project was supported by Grant No. 2019-DC-BX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office of Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.





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TRIBAL LAW AND POLICY INSTITUTE **A Native American operated non-profit:**

Dedicated to providing free publication resources, comprehensive training, and technical assistance for Native nations and tribal justice systems in pursuit of our vision to empower Native communities to create and control their own institutions for the benefit of all community members, now, and for future generations.



▶ TODAY'S PRESENTATION

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1: An overview of how to assess your program documents to implement your tribal values as the foundation of your mission statement, value statement and programmatic goals of your healing to wellness court.
- Objective 2: How to remove federal language from your healing to wellness programming manuals and incorporate traditional values within the best practice framework.
- Objective 3: Welcoming participants home and establishing recovery capital through traditional activities on their road to recovery.



▶ HISTORY OF HEALING TO WELLNESS COURTS

"Healing to Wellness Courts are the manifestation of a community coalescing to heal. They are a modern take on restorative traditions. It is fitting, that in Wellness Court we strive to listen and care, and in our pursuits our community bonds also heal."

Lauren van Schilfgaarde,
TLPI Technical Assistance Provider



▶ GRANT FUNDING

How many of your programs are currently grant funded?

1. Yes
2. No

How many of your programs were grant funded at one time?



▶ PROGRAMMATIC GOALS

To provide adult treatment courts and professionals in the criminal justice system with the resources needed to plan, implement, enhance, and sustain evidence-based treatment court programs for individuals with nonviolent charges and convictions as specified above with substance use disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system.



▶ MISSION STATEMENTS

- The Mission Statement of the healing to wellness court is to protect the public safety and reduce the criminal recidivism rate of alcohol and drug addicted offenders through an integrated approach that involves court supervision, substance abuse treatment.
- The mission of the Wellness Court is to reduce recidivism by actively supporting community members to live healthy, spiritual, sober lifestyles and to be caring positive role models for future generations.



▶ WHY LANGUAGE MATTERS

- It is the original sound of this part of the earth (aki); it is our ancestral sound and connects us to our relatives; it is the connection to creation
- Those sounds are the same sounds that the land, the trees, the animals have heard from the beginning
- Repeating the sounds of our ancestors is healing, the language was nearly lost and its restoration is our restoration, this revitalization is the clients revitalization
- Using language connects your program to your community, your history, and connects your client to their identity



▶ LTBB MISSION STATEMENT

The MISSION of the Waabshki-Miigwan (White Feather) Program is to implement a collaborative partnership among the community, service providers, court and adults who face substance abuse challenges in order to restore holistic balance using Odawa values and teachings as envisioned by our ancestors in order to ignite the healing and rehabilitation of non-violent addicted offenders.



▶ SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

- Break into small groups and complete the provided handouts



▶ VALUES

- While developing the WMDCP we have used many already established and proven recovery principles. The LTBB culture served as our main guide. The Seven Grandfather Teachings, Medicine Wheel Teachings and the White Feather Story are the foundation of WMDCP.
- We used the **Ten Key Components of Wellness Courts** as a guide when organizing the overall structure of our court program. We examined many examples of how other Tribal Drug courts utilized these guidelines and in many cases were able to adopt their ideas into our program.
- WMDCP has utilized the **Twelve Step** as a guide in developing the treatment portion of the program. These programs are established and successful in treating drug and alcohol addiction. **Alcoholics Anonymous(AA) and The Red Road to Wellbriety** make up the core of our treatment curriculum. Many **natives** have used these principles to get **clean and sober**.



▶ PROGRAM MANUALS

- Advisory committee to review materials
- Reviewing documents for language that comes from federal grant applications
- Reviewing documents for language that is confusing to participants
- If someone picked up your manuals who they be able to identify what community they are coming from?





STORY TELLING AS A RESPONSE TO CLIENT BEHAVIOR

- Story telling was/is used as a method of teaching cultural values and was a source of connection between children and Elders
- When clients do something that we don't want, a culturally centered way of addressing that behavior is to have them listen to a teaching or story that addresses the issue and at the same time reinforces recovery principles
- Relating the seven grandfather teachings, parts of the creation story and other cultural stories create connection between the client, the culture and the community



▶ REVIEWING MATERIALS

- Using your tribal values and mission statement to guide your policies and programming manuals
- Example: "Sanctions and incentives are intended to enhance recovery and heighten client accountability and are administered in a graduated manner to direct participants and guide them on their healing to wellness journey."
- Aanjiwenyiwi: to renew one's effort



▶ CLIENT ENTRY

- What does the entry process look like?
- How is entry into the program framed?
- Is the entry process aligned with your cultural values and program mission?



CLIENT ENTRY



▶ CLIENT ENTRANCE

- Waabshki-Miigwaan:
 - Formal client contract
 - Entrance hearing was a “standard” court hearing without the team present
 - Highly scripted and very formalized
 - No cultural engagement
- How did clients respond?
 - Clients were not engaged
 - Repeated what they were told to repeat
 - Answered the scripted questions as expected



▶ CLIENT ENTRANCE

How did the entrance process change?

- Client welcoming fire
 - Cultural Resource Advisors explain the significance of the fire and have medicines available
 - Team members are present to introduce themselves, greet client and thank them for taking this step towards healing
 - Held prior to the entrance hearing in court
- How did this change the clients' response?
 - Reduced client anxiety about program entry
 - Established the cultural focus of the program
 - First contact with the team was very positive



► BUILDING RECOVERY CAPITAL THROUGH CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

- The majority of WMDCP clients are “cultural orphans”
 - Not raised with cultural practices
 - Unfamiliar with traditional activities
 - Don’t have an Anishinaabe noozwin (spirit name)
 - Don’t know what their doodem (clan) is
 - Have minimal knowledge of medicines and how they are used



► BUILDING RECOVERY CAPITAL THROUGH CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

- How can we change that?
- Create connection with the community and culture
- In the program, clients receive:
 - An Anishinaabemowin introduction sheet; name, clan, place of birth, where they live now
 - Men receive a fire bundle; flint/steel, ishkitaagan
 - Women receive a water bundle; copper cup, placement cloth
 - All clients receive a personal copper cup, asemma pouch and feast bundle
 - Programming that is based on the seven grandfather teachings and utilizes resources like the Mishoomis Book and other materials written by Anishinaabek



BUILDING RECOVERY CAPITAL THROUGH CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

- Outside of the program:
 - Clients are connected to culture keepers and traditional artisans
 - Clients engage in activities based on a seasonal calendar
 - The goal is to deepen the client's relationship with and investment in their community and create reciprocal investment by the community with the clients





Tribal Healing to Wellness Court

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TRIBAL HEALING TO WELLNESS COURTS PROJECT

TLPI provides a Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Training and Technical Assistance Project which includes:

- Customized onsite and offsite technical assistance and resources to assist Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts in planning, implementation, and enhancement
- Regional and national trainings, including the Annual Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Enhancement Training
- The Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Publication and Webinar series

This project – currently funded under a grant from the [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#) - includes the www.WellnessCourts.org website which serves as a resource center for project resources and contains relevant law and policy updates for Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts





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THANK YOU!

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