

2023 Tribal Healing to Wellness Court Enhancement Training

Celebrating 25 Years of Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts

September 12–14, 2023

Renaissance Palm Springs Hotel

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation

This training is approved by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Tuesday, September 12, 2023

7:00am – 8:00am	Registration / Check-In	Ballroom Foyer
8:30am – 8:45am	Opening	Catalina / Madera/ Pasadena
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Remarks from the Tribal Law and Policy Institute 	
8:45am – 9:45am	Plenary	Catalina / Madera/ Pasadena
	Twenty-Five Years of Tribal Healing to Wellness Courts	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Joseph Flies-Away, CAB Member, Community and Nation Building Facilitator</i> <p>Plenary Description: Healing to Wellness Courts have been operating in Tribal Nations for more than 25 years. Healing to Wellness Courts stem from drug courts, which were first funded in 1995 by the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance – Drug Court Program Office. In these 25+ years, Tribal Nations have developed Adult, Juvenile, Family, and Veteran’s Healing to Wellness Courts, many times giving them their own Tribal name. As each Nation is different, each Healing to Wellness Court is unique and culturally accordant with the people and communities who designed it. This session will highlight this development. Conference attendees will hear stories from Wellness Court pioneers and practitioners and collectively envision what the next 25 years will bring.</p>	
9:45am – 10:00am	Break (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)	
10:00am – 11:15am	1st Breakout – Session A	

A2 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts **Justice Systems from a Child’s Perspective: Supporting Native Child Victims and Witnesses** **Sierra**

- *Alisha Morrison, Senior Program Manager, Tribal Justice Exchange, Center for Justice Innovation*

Session Description: Children are amongst the most vulnerable members of our society and are widely recognized as requiring care and protection, yet they are often victims of or witnesses to substance misuse, abuse, and other crimes. As a result, children may have to navigate child legal systems that are intimidating, confusing, and overwhelming for adults, let alone for children, whose systems’ involvement may exacerbate their trauma and distress. In addition, Native American child victims and witnesses have unique historical, community, and cultural contexts, and often face the added challenge of navigating complicated jurisdictional issues between Tribal, state, and federal justice systems. The Center for Justice Innovation’s Child Witness Materials Project, an initiative funded by the U.S. Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), addresses these systemic gaps through a package of materials for children aged 2–18 that empower and inform them as they interact with legal systems. These materials utilize illustrated narratives featuring child and adolescent characters that explain these systems work in a culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate way. Recognizing the unique needs of Native child victims and witnesses, the OVC provided additional funding to the Center to create specialized materials for this population.

In this presentation, participants will learn more about how Native children experience legal systems, and how to best meet their informational and emotional support needs in a trauma-informed, child-friendly way, including through the use of the Center’s child witness materials.

11:15am – 11:30am Break (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)

11:30 am – 12:45pm 2nd Breakout – Session B

B2 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts **Family-Centered Practices for Family Healing to Wellness Courts** **Sierra**

- *Will Blakeley, Program Associate, Center for Children and Family Futures*
- *Ashay Shah, Senior Program Associate, Center Children and Family Futures*

Session Description: This session discusses key components of a family-centered, behavior-focused, problem-solving approach in Family Healing to Wellness Court (FHWC) precourt staffing and court hearings. When they first emerged, FHWCs focused primarily on a parent’s recovery. Over the past

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decade, many FHWCs evolved to meet the individual needs of parents and children. Still, services felt disconnected from one another and often overlooked the health of parent-child or family relationships. Today, FHWCs treat the parent, child, and the family unit as a whole—helping families break the cycle of substance use, child abuse, and neglect—while paving the way for healthy, stable home environments where children can thrive. This session makes abstract concepts concrete, illustrating how teams can apply these principles in FHCW practices, including behavior responses, phases, precourt staffing, and hearings.

12:45pm – 2:15pm Lunch (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)

2:15pm – 3:30pm 3rd Breakout – Session C

C2 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts **Resiliency in Juvenile Healing to Wellness Program Design** **Sierra**

- *Selina Kenmille, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Coordinator, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes*
- *Nan Benally, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute (Moderator)*

Session Description: The session begins with an overview of pitfalls and triumphs during the planning stages and discuss opportunities in creating curriculum fit to organizational goals. Presenters will explore the importance of having a knowledgeable staff and committed advisory committee and will discuss pivotal planning in creating a Juvenile Healing to Wellness program. The presenters will demonstrate how community asset mapping is useful in programming. More importantly, the presenters will acknowledge the importance of culture and utilizing Tribal elders in creating a strong foundation for Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts.

3:30pm – 3:45pm Break (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)

3:45pm – 5:00pm 4th Breakout – Session D

D1 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts **Impacts and Implication of McGirt Ruling on Oklahoma Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts** **Catalina / Madera/ Pasadena**

- *Patti Buhl, Director, Department of Juvenile Justice, Cherokee Nation*
- *Leah Hitcher, Coordinator Juvenile Healing to Wellness, Cherokee Nation*
- *Alisha Edelen, Director, Community Services, Choctaw Nation*

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- *Amber Loftis, Program Manager, Juvenile Services, Choctaw Nation*
- *Britney Bush, Program Coordinator, Juvenile Healing to Wellness, Choctaw Nation*
- *Pat Sekaquaptewa, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts Training and Technical Assistance Manager, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute (Moderator)*

Session Description: Due to the 2020 Supreme Court ruling *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, both the Cherokee Nation and the Choctaw Nation were afforded the right to prosecute crimes within their reservation boundaries. The impacts of the ruling provided each Tribe the ability to creatively work with Indigenous youth in a restorative capacity. While the ruling posed many challenges for both Tribes, the Tribes were able to rely on their resilience and develop preventative programs to keep Indigenous youth out of the justice system. With the incorporation of cultural healing and assisting the youth and families in gaining an understanding of the impacts of historical trauma, Tribes in Oklahoma are able to use a restorative approach in the juvenile justice system.

This session will highlight how the Choctaw Nation and the Cherokee Nation were able to rise to the challenge of having jurisdiction of all Tribal members within their reservation boundaries. In addition, we will discuss how both the Cherokee Nation and Choctaw Nation are taking a multigenerational approach and working with the family systems as a whole.

D2 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts

Indigenous Models of Restorative Practices

Sierra

- *Stephanie Autumn, Tribal Youth Resource Center Director, Tribal Law and Policy Institute*
- *Grace Carson, Skadden Fellow, Tribal Law and Policy Institute*
- *Suzanne Garcia, Tribal Legal and Child Welfare Specialist, Tribal Law and Policy Institute (Moderator)*

Session Description: Indigenous models of restorative practice effect long-term systems change by focusing on strengthening relationships. Indigenous models of restorative justice are an approach to justice that attempts to address the root causes of system and community harm and provide restorative processes for those who have been harmed. This session will examine these two models that are related yet very different. Presenters will explore the philosophy, values, concepts, and framework of each of these Indigenous models, differentiate them from those utilized in Western system environments, and engage attendees in a discussion about how these models can support successful Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts. Presenters will discuss current Indigenous restorative practices applications that build relationships, communities, and the capacity to lift the voice and choice of families and youth who are most impacted by the disparities that exist in Tribal and non-Tribal

communities as well as restorative justice applications that emphasize healing and accountability rather than compliance through a punitive approach.

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

7:00am – 8:00am	Registration / Check-In	Ballroom Foyer
8:30am – 8:45am	Opening	Catalina / Madera/ Pasadena
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Remarks from the Tribal Law and Policy Institute 	
8:45am – 9:45am	Plenary	
	Safety Considerations in Celebrating 25 Years of Tribal Healing to Wellness	Catalina / Madera/ Pasadena
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tanya Grassel-Krietlow, South Dakota Network FAST Grant Manager, FAST Tribal Sexual Assault Initiative</i> • <i>Gayle Thom, Retired Federal Bureau of Investigation</i> 	
	<p>Plenary Description: As we celebrate 25 years of Healing to Wellness, what is more central to enhancing the capacity of healing and wellness than the safety of Wellness Court professionals and other service providers? Planning for victims’ and survivors’ freedom from violence is a critical component for service providers. However, the safety of adults, juveniles, family, veterans, and DUI/DWI Healing to Wellness Court professionals is also a vital part of overall safety planning. Yet personal safety can be a complex matter. Training, research, and evaluation often focus solely on the safety of victims and survivors we are privileged to serve. Without addressing personal safety of all Tribal justice professional/other service providers, are we missing the true impact of striving to build a deeper and more comprehensively resilient perspective of safety for all involved in the justice realm? Simple steps will be presented that all court and service providers can use in their everyday lives. These are not meant to be all-encompassing—simply thought-provoking to help promote conversation and understanding of what additional training might be helpful. Our goal is to provide hope and inspiration by offering these simple steps attendees can use in their everyday lives. Informal and formal research is included in the presentation regarding safety considerations; as well as information from the Sexual Assault Forensic-Medical and Advocacy Services for the Tribes initiative that is funded by the Office on Violence Against Women.</p>	
9:45am – 10:00am	Break (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)	
10:00am – 11:15am	1st Breakout – Session E	

E2 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts	Trauma and Staff Wellness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maegan Rides At The Door, Executive Director, National Native Children's Trauma Center</i> • <i>Marilyn Zimmerman, Sr. Director of Policy and Programs, National Native Children's Trauma Center</i> • <i>Stephanie Autumn, Tribal Youth Resource Center Director, Tribal Law and Policy Institute (Moderator)</i> <p>Session Description: Participants will look at how to practice staff wellness in a stressful work environment. This module will highlight the toll that working with traumatized youth can take on staff and the organization. It will help participants reduce their own stress and address challenging situations. This module will emphasize secondary traumatic stress, however, it will also incorporate conversation revolving around other stresses in the work environment.</p>	Sierra
11:15am – 11:30am	Break (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)	
11:30 am – 12:45pm	2nd Breakout – Session F	
F2 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts	Breaking Ground as a Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Leah Hitcher, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Coordinator, Cherokee Nation</i> • <i>Roxanne Burt, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Coordinator, Tule River Tribe</i> • <i>Julio De Los Santos, Juvenile Affairs Case Manager, Quapaw Nation</i> • <i>Erin Thin Elk, Consultant, Tribal Law and Policy Institute (Moderator)</i> <p>Session Description: Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court coordinators will discuss making the move to becoming staff for their Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court. Panelists will explain their backgrounds, the learning curve, and takeaways during their initial hire. Coordinators will also provide stories about how previous experience helped prepare them for the expectations of being a Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court coordinator. Finally, panelists will provide words of encouragement to attendees on persistence and the value of seeing youth grow in a Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court setting.</p>	Sierra
12:45pm – 2:15pm	Lunch (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)	
2:15pm – 3:30pm	3rd Breakout – Session G	

G2 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts **Wellness and Healing for Native Youth through Traditional Restorative Practices within Tribal Youth Peer Courts** **Sierra**

- *Dwight K. Lomayesva, Coordinator, Intertribal Court of Southern California; Executive Director, America Indian Recruitment Programs*
- *Hon. Angela Medrano, Pro Tem Judge, Intertribal Court of Southern California*
- *Dianne Cisneros, Tribal Youth Court Coordinator, Intertribal Court of Southern California*
- *Nan Benally, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute (Moderator)*

Session Description: Tribal Youth Court (TYC), is a division of the Intertribal Court of Southern California that serves San Diego County and Riverside County Tribes. TYC is a diversion-based project with a mission to provide at-risk Native youth opportunities for accountability, growth, and healing through wellness-based responses. Statistically, Native youth have the lowest graduation rates among all races. According to Kidsdata, Native youth have ranked disproportionately high within the categories of gang membership, drug and alcohol use, and contemplating suicide. All areas point to our Native youth having great social challenges and making misguided decisions that may result in harm and ultimately leads to a pathway toward the juvenile justice system. TYC created a model program that utilizes restorative justice ideals and community to work with Native juvenile offenders through a youth peer court. Including youth peers into our model led to the development of the Native Youth Peer Decision Makers training program that will engage our Peer Decision Makers to guide them in their intervention decisions within the Youth Court and provide them greater understanding on Tribal custom and traditions, as well as Tribal governance. Collaborating with our Tribes, regional universities, and native organizations, we are working together to bring wellness within our Tribal communities. Our ultimate goal is to bring Native youth back into our communities through wellness intervention within the Youth Peer Court. Native youth peers will hear and assist in the intervention of the juvenile participants. Tribal Youth Court staff share their stories, including the motivation for a Juvenile Court, planning efforts, struggles and challenges, strengths and accomplishments, and future plans for the program to ensure sustainability and growth.

3:30pm – 3:45pm Break (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)

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3:45pm – 5:00pm 4th Breakout – Session H

**H2 - Juvenile/Family
Healing to Wellness
Courts**

Cultural Considerations in Tracking Qualitative Data

Sierra

- *Erin Thin Elk, Consultant, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute*

Session Description: Some years ago, a program located on an American Indian Reservation, received funding to assist children with mental health needs. The funding agency stipulated that the program participate in a specified data collection process. The company that was contracted to do the data collection part of the evaluation program did not have a clear understanding of the culture of the Tribal community. The evaluation and data collection was designed without the input of the Tribal programs which led to Tribal community members’ resistance in participation. While this example is fictitious, there are numerous accounts of Tribal communities being subject to inappropriate data tools without respect to the local culture and language. This session focuses on the importance of identifying cultural considerations in data collection. The facilitators will highlight the importance of cultural data collection strategies and the critical need to collaborate with Tribal communities to ensure their sovereignty is honored.

Thursday, September 14, 2023

8:30am – 8:45am	Opening	Catalina / Madera/ Pasadena
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Remarks from the Tribal Law and Policy Institute 	
8:45am – 9:45am	Plenary	Catalina / Madera/ Pasadena
	<p>Celebrating 16 Years of Joint Jurisdiction Courts: “Where We Started, Where We Are, and Where We Are Going”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hon. Korey Wahwassuck, Judge, Itasca County District Court</i> • <i>Hon. Evelyn Dolchok, Chief Tribal Judge, Kenaitze Indian Tribe</i> <p>Plenary Description: Tribal, state, federal, and local courts operate in a patchwork of overlapping jurisdictions, facing common challenges and limited resources. To address these concerns, a growing number of courts have come together in a joint jurisdictional model that acknowledges each other’s autonomy, while sharing resources for better outcomes for everyone. During this plenary session, two Joint Jurisdiction Court practitioners will tell the story of how joint jurisdiction courts began, discuss their implementation and development over the years, share lessons learned, and make recommendations for other jurisdictions considering a collaborative approach to heal their own communities and improve outcomes for the people they serve.</p>	
9:45am – 10:00am	Break (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)	
10:00am – 11:15am	1st Breakout – Session I	
12 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts	Best Practices in Conducting Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Processes (Intake, Staffing, Status Hearing and Case Management Meetings)	Sierra
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nan Benally, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute</i> • <i>Erin Thin Elk, Consultant, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute</i> • <i>Pat Sekaquaptewa, Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts Training and Technical Assistance Manager, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute</i> 	

- *Laura Smith, Program Coordinator, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute*

Session Description: This session will feature a walk-through intake as well as Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court hearing. The intake will focus on some common questions and issues to avoid during these critical stages of participant involvement. Presenters will engage with the audience to gain their input on what next steps should be and what could have been done differently. The walk-through intake will address issues such as family involvement, participant willingness, and confidentiality. The performance will culminate in a Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court Hearing where participants will show what to expect during a hearing and common issues that may stem from the intake/case management process.

11:15am – 11:30am Break (On your own. No government-provided meals or break food or beverages.)

11:30am – 12:45pm 2nd Breakout – Session J

J2 - Juvenile/Family Healing to Wellness Courts

The Art of Rebuilding: The Willingness to Change

Sierra

- *Hon. Sherrie Harris, Juvenile Judge, San Carlos Tribal Court, San Carlos Apache Tribe*
- *Hon. Karla Comanche, Chief Judge, San Carlos Tribal Court, San Carlos Apache Tribe*
- *Laura Smith, Program Coordinator, Tribal Youth Resource Center, Tribal Law and Policy Institute (Moderator)*

Session Description: COVID-19 presented challenges in the planning process; we will describe some of the challenges we experienced and discuss the steps we have taken to overcome and address these challenges, based on the feedback received from partners and stakeholders and reassessing the work done pre-pandemic. This reflection identified the need to improve communication and collaboration within our team as well as restructuring our approach to court development. The team was able to prioritize meeting the needs of community youth post-COVID-19 while still meeting project goals and objectives.

12:45pm – 1:15pm Closing

**Catalina / Madera/
Pasadena**