



The Healing Forest: A Model for Community Wellbriety



an American Indian non-profit corporation

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Four Laws of Change

- ◆ Change comes from within
- ◆ In order for development to occur, it must be preceded by a vision
- ◆ A great learning must occur
- ◆ You must create a healing forest



The Healing Forest Model illustrates that anger, guilt, shame and fear are underneath alcoholism, codependency and other community issues, as an unhealthy root system. The Healing Forest Model stresses that alcoholism, codependency, or violence and other issues must be addressed at the “root system.” In addition, the issues must all be addressed together and simultaneously--they are inter-related and they are also interconnected by the roots-- a fear-based system. The way to get rid of these unhealthy root systems is to replace them with spiritual principles. The Healing Forest Model provides a cultural and spiritual approach to community development. The numbers in the model refer to the trainings designed to address the issue. These are described on the next page.



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TRAIN THE TRAINER



The Third Law is that a “Great Learning Must Occur.” The Grassroots Wellbriety Wellness Kit is a collection of trainings that provide the foundation for individuals, families, and community leaders to begin shaping their community into a Healing Forest. The Grassroots Wellbriety Wellness Kit is to be implemented in a simultaneous three day session. These trainings provide prevention, treatment and recovery “tools” and “strategies.” (The numbers under each title refer to the issues that are illustrated in the Healing Forest Model.)

The Kit is designed to be implemented as a “train-the-trainer” program, in which key individuals would be trained on how to deliver these trainings and then these facilitators would do the actual training in the communities. The actual implementation strategy, costs, and logistics for the Grassroots Wellbriety Wellness Kit can be received by contacting White Bison, Inc.

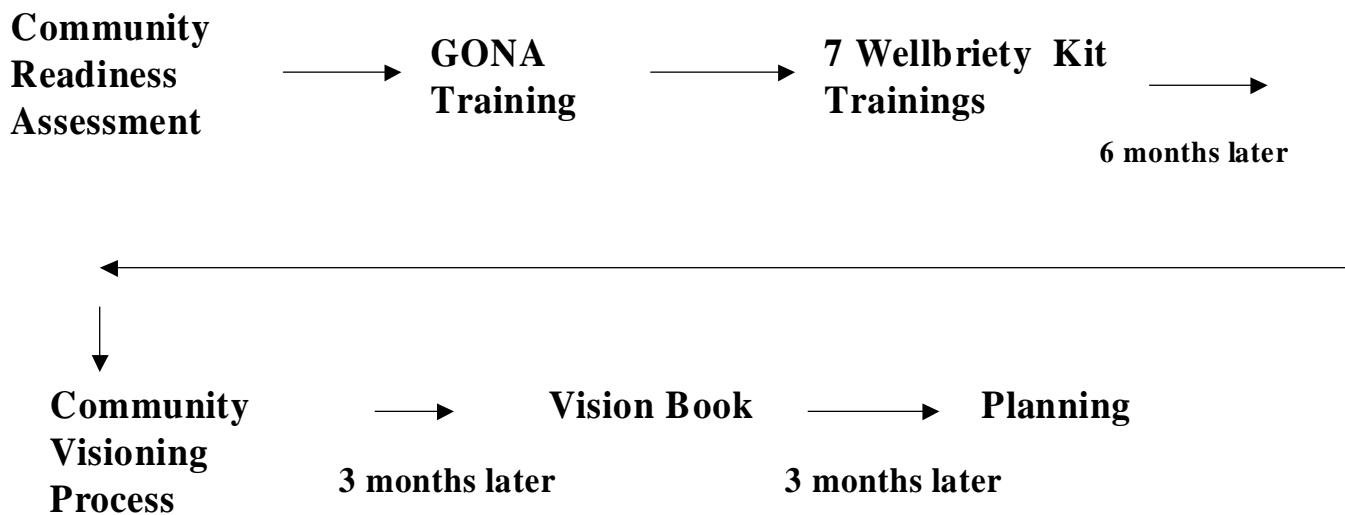


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A Natural Order for Community Wellbriety



The Grassroots Wellbriety Wellness Kit (7 trainings) is part of a greater two year community change project. The goal of these seven trainings is to simultaneously implement trainings that will help people in recovery, their friends, family, community and young people. There is an expression that describes what happens when one person in a family group or small community gets sober: “recovery trauma.” Patterns of behavior and expected reactions are different, creating anxiety, distrust, and confusion. By implementing training not only for the person in recovery, but for his/her sons, daughters, spouse, extended family members and community will help to alleviate some of this trauma. Letting people know that it exists is the first step to solving the problems that it creates.

Following Sacred Hoop Journey III: Healing Native Women and Children, it became painfully obvious that something more needed to be done to help those whose lives had been impacted by loved ones who were abusing alcohol or drugs. It was important to provide opportunities for healing for them. Because everything is interconnected (individual, family, community, nation; child, youth, adult, elder; prevention, treatment, intervention and recovery) it is essential that each person in the community have the opportunity to participate in a healing process that brings about Wellbriety: sobriety plus a healthy lifestyle that is balanced emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually.



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There are a series of steps that White Bison recommends communities follow in order to get the most benefit from implementing the seven trainings. The stages of implementation follow a natural order that helps to build trust, confidence and participation within the community. These steps are listed below and explained on the pages that follow:

YEAR ONE

- 1. Meet with interested Recovery Community Members** and share the goals, objectives, and process. (Introduces the Four Laws of Change, the Healing Forest and other principles, laws and values that provide the foundation for this community change process.
- 2. Community Readiness Survey:** A variety of people in the community provide information about their perception about the state of the community's readiness to change. (It's carried out like a Gallup Poll). This survey is conducted by individuals within the community (rather than by outsiders). The results of this survey provide direction the development of the action plan at a later time.
- 3. Gathering of Native Americans (GONA)** is a community healing and historical trauma recovery program that has been successfully implemented in many Native American communities. This is a three day interactive program that enables people to learn about working in teams, creating coalitions, and about how to transform painful experiences and community memories into positive energy that enables healthy change. Six months after this.....
- 4. Grassroots Wellbriety Wellness Kit Trainings.** The Seven Trainings are delivered in a three day conference format. The introductory session explains the Healing Forest model, and the importance of implementing all seven trainings in their community. Community members choose from among the seven trainings dependent upon their interests and background. Each of the trainings is a "train-the-trainer" program. Individuals learn how to deliver the training back in their own neighborhood. Each participant receives a curriculum kit for the particular program. Upon completion of the Seven Trainings participants return to their community to create Circles where they can pass on what they have learned. Then three months later.....
- 5. Community Visioning:** From among those individuals who have participated in the Seven Trainings Conference, a core team is chosen and trained to help lead a community visioning process. This process involves as many people from the community as wish to participate. It is usually held in a large gymnasium. Participants explore a series of community issues from the perspective of child, youth, adult and elder. These issues are examined in terms of "What is broken?" and then "how it would look if healing were to take place?" Small groups create mind maps and visual images of what they see as a possible future. The core team then assembles these images and mind maps into categories, identifies themes, and defines the key actions that were recommended by the visioning participants. Three months after this....



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6. The Vision Book: The results of the visioning process as well as the experience of the process itself are incorporated into a manuscript that tells the story of what happened, what the community sees as its preferred future. Out of this visioning process also arises specific core values that the community acknowledges as important qualities of its character. Shortly after the vision book is published....

YEAR TWO:

7. Action Planning and Implementation: The vision book becomes the basis for the action plans and the implementation process for transforming the vision into reality. A significant portion of the Action Planning and Implementation Process begins with a communication plan back at the very beginning. This communication plan is designed to keep community leaders informed and involved in the process so that they maintain their interest and enthusiasm for the grassroots efforts that are being made. Action planning and implementation also rely upon the natural coalitions that develop around the interest among members of the Recovery Community. Some of the implementation may involve additional training (i.e. parenting; co-dependency) or community initiated policy changes (i.e. tougher DUI laws).

8. Evaluation and review: Continuous review and revising the Vision book and action planning process is an important part of the overall project. Milestones that were established with the action planning and implementation process should be recognized and celebrated. Revisions should also take place given new situations and new ways of thinking that develop over time. At all times, a regular pulsing of the progress and the achievements should be established early on and continued throughout the implementation.

During the second year, White Bison would provide technical assistance and guidance as the community, itself, implements its vision.



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Grassroots Wellbriety Training Programs

Medicine Wheel and 12 Steps for Women:



This is a nine part video series of the Medicine Wheel and The Twelve Steps for Women who choose to follow the twelve step program. A workbook is included. Topics include The Talking Circle, Growing up as an Indian Woman, The Two Thought Systems, Reclaiming Your Power, Being A Positive Influence, Overview of the Twelve Steps, The Twelve Steps in a Circle, and Instructions for Each of the Twelve Steps.

Medicine Wheel and 12 Steps for Men



This is a seven part video series that approaches the twelve steps of recovery from a Native American perspective. It includes a workbook. Topics are Medicine Wheel Teachings, Cycle of Life (growing up as an Indian man), Four Directions of Growth, The Two Thought Systems, The Four Directions and The Twelve Steps, Overview of The Twelve Steps, and Instructions on taking each of the Twelve Steps from a cultural approach.

Daughters of Tradition



This is a year long prevention education program for Native American girls age 8-12. The primary theme of the program is "being good at something, being good for something." The curriculum is based upon the teachings of the Native American Elders and Clan Mothers. It consists of a fact booklet, a journal, a set of 12 posters (one for each month) and a T-shirt. Facilitators also receive the same kit with additional components: a set of large posters suitable for posting on the wall, a set of four instructional videos and a facilitator's manual with lesson guides. Facilitators are trained in a three day program that introduces them to the principles, laws and values that form the basis of the program, options for using the curriculum, and how to use talking circles and mind mapping, which are integral to the training program.

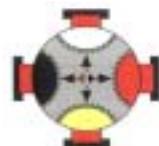
Sons of Tradition



This is a year long prevention education program for Native American boys age 13-17. The focus of this program is establishing identity and learning what it is to be a Native American man. The curriculum is based upon the teachings of the Native American Elders and Clan Mothers. It consists of the Seven Philosophies, a set of posters, and a workbook. Facilitators receive these materials along with a set of instructional videos, a facilitator's manual and lesson guides. Facilitators are trained in a three day program that introduces them to the principles, laws, and values that form the basis of the program, options for using the curriculum, and how to use talking circles and mind mapping, which are integral to the training program.



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Family Series



This training explores family dynamics, relationships, roles, parenting, conflict management, and the development of trust and respect in the family. It is based upon the teachings of the Medicine Wheel and features the Eagle Feather Teachings. There are 5 videos, a work book and syllabus for this series.

Children of Alcoholics



This series is designed to provide a supportive and nurturing environment for young people to learn how the talking circle can develop trust, provide healing and support and develop hope for young people whose families are affected by alcohol abuse. Videos that accompany this set include How to Conduct Talking Circles, the Cycle of Life and Positive Self-talk.

Firestarters for Friends and Family



This is a Medicine Wheel and 12 Step program (with 9 videos) designed for Friends and Family of people affected by alcohol. It focuses on such issues as co-dependency, taking care of one's self, and learning to let go.



The Elders have told us that we have entered the “Coming Together Time” in which a great healing can occur among individuals, families, communities and nations.



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