

The Native American Healing Experience

DON COYHIS¹ AND RICHARD SIMONELLI^{1,2}

¹White Bison, Inc., Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA

²Mountain Sage Writing and Publishing, Nederland, Colorado, USA

Recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs is taking place with the assistance of culture-specific methods in American Indian and Alaska Native communities in North America. These communities utilize many of the recovery approaches that make up today's best practices, but they also use their own cultural and ethnic strengths as an important part of their addictions recovery. The Wellbriety Movement among Native people is one such expression of culture-specific healing for North Americans having the heritage of indigenous peoples. The rallying call, "Our culture is prevention," expresses an approach unique in addictions recovery processes anywhere.

Keywords healing; natural law; recovery; Wellbriety; wellness; culture; spirituality; intergenerational trauma; historical trauma

Introduction

It is almost an urban legend to say that American Indians and Alaska Natives are predisposed to alcohol addiction and have been so since first European contact in 1492. It is something most people know about because that kind of information is "in the air," imposing hearsay and stigma on Native Americans. But what we perhaps do not know is that *there is no scientific evidence whatsoever to support the notion that the indigenous people of North America are biologically and racially prone to alcoholism* (Coyhis and White, 2006, pp. 47–55). Most of us are also unaware of the fact that efforts to resist and recover from the effects of alcohol on Native communities have been alive among Native Americans for over 250 years and continue to this day (Coyhis and White, 2006, pp. 229–230).

A look at the Indian experience since World War II reveals that a recovery, healing, and Wellbriety movement based in a return to the principles, laws, and values of traditional Native culture is vibrantly alive in Native communities today. For many Native Americans, addictions recovery signifies a personal journey from intervention, to treatment, to conventional recovery, and then on to wellness. The process begins when something intervenes in a person's pattern of drinking or "drugging." One term for this is "significant event" (Wellbriety!, 2007, p. 6). It continues when the pattern is treated with any of the treatment¹

Address correspondence to Don Coyhis, White Bison, Inc., 6145 Lehman Drive, Suite 200 Colorado Springs, CO 80918-3440. E-mail: don@whitebison.org and amanda@whitebison.org.

¹Treatment can be briefly and usefully defined as a planned, goal-directed change process, which is *bounded* (culture, place, time, etc.) and can be categorized into professional-based, tradition-based, mutual help-based (AA, NA, etc.), and self-help ("natural recovery") models. There are no unique models or techniques used with substance users—of whatever types—which aren't also used with nonsubstance users. In the West, with the relatively new ideology of "harm reduction" and the even newer Quality of Life (QOL) treatment-driven model, there is now a new set of goals in addition to those derived from/associated with the older tradition of abstinence-driven models. Editor's note.

methodologies known today. This leads to the phenomena of being “in recovery.” But for those following the Wellbriety movement, a further journey to wellness is understood to follow.

What is this new term, “Wellbriety”? It means to be both sober and well. It is a translation into English of a word from the language of the Passamaquoddy nation of Maine given by an Elder in the mid-1990s (Simonelli, Summer 1995). It means achieving sobriety and abstinence from substance abuse² and misuse without stopping there. It means going beyond “clean and sober” by entering a journey of healing and balance—mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. For many Native Americans, it also means recovering culturally. *Return to the culture* is a vision embraced by many American Indians as integral with addictions recovery (Coyhis, 2000), (Tundra Drums, 2007). It signifies a desire to live through the best attributes of traditional Native cultures, while standing firmly on the ground of contemporary life. Non-Native recovery approaches often look at addiction as an individual disease, ignoring the social, political, or economic roots of addiction. The indigenous experience adds a dimension of acknowledging sociopolitical causes without removing an individual’s need to do the hard work it takes to heal. This is new, culturally specific thinking that can also add to the field of mainstream recovery knowledge. The modern recovery journey begins just after World War II when over 25,000 Native American veterans were discharged from the American military and went home to their reservation communities.

Post–World War II Experiences

The last decade of the 19th century and the first five or six decades of the 20th century were times of suppression of Native American cultures and ways of life through the federal policy of assimilation. Military violence had ceased but the government pressed Native people to assimilate into the melting pot of American life. American Indian Elders tell us that the alcohol problem for Native people got worse after World War II as men and women came back to their reservations after military life and war. It also worsened when Indians earned the right to purchase alcohol and drink in bars by decree of the Eisenhower administration in 1953.³ But in keeping with the tradition of resistance to alcohol, the years after World War II also saw the birth of the sobriety movement in Indian country (Wellbriety!, 2005).

After World War II Native people began attending the relatively new Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) to help with drinking problems. A few Indian people having alcohol consumption-related problems were starting to get sober in AA but they had to leave behind their own cultural ways in the process because they were still in fact illegal or discouraged by the federal government and the Christian missionaries on Indian reservations. It was not until the civil rights fervor of the 1960s that Indians could begin their practice of tribal spirituality and tribal ways of life openly, with the hope that these could enter their recovery process too (Deloria, V. Jr., 1988, 2003, 2006).

The Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 (ICRA, 1968), and the American Indian Religions Freedom Act of 1978 (AIRFA, 1978) with its Native American Church Peyote amendment

²The journal’s style utilizes the category *substance abuse* as a diagnostic category. Substances are used or misused; living organisms are and can be *abused*. Editor’s note.

³Until July 1, 1953, it was against U.S. federal law to knowingly sell an alcoholic beverage to an American Indian or Alaska Native individual. Legislation by the Eisenhower Administration ended this precedent that extended over one hundred years of the historical period in the United States.

of 1994, made it possible for Native cultural ways to come out from behind closed doors.^{4,5} These life-ways could begin to find their way into culturally appropriate and culturally competent alcohol and drug use recovery approaches because they were no longer illegal. By 1980, Native cultural practices, prayers, or sentiments were expressed at some AA meetings. By 1990, NANACOA (National Association of Native American Children of Alcoholics) offered people raised in alcoholic families a chance to enter healing in a meeting context that freely utilized Indian cultural practices (Wellbriety!, 2005). These include smudging with sage, cedar, and sweet grass, as well as speaking prayers in one's own tribal language or utilizing tribal drum groups, ceremonies, and songs as part of meetings and conventions. The Wellbriety Movement was born in the early to mid-1990s by offering the Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps program that merged 12 Step AA with the teachings of the Medicine Wheel (Coyhis and White, 2006). This approach uses any or all of the various local tribal traditions, as appropriate, in meetings and in talking circles. The Wellbriety Movement also emphasized the need to go beyond sobriety in order to heal the deep wounds of intergenerational trauma carried by almost all Indian people. Native people now understand that alcoholism is a symptom of more deeply imbedded wounds. One such wound is the trauma of oppressive genocidal behaviors and policies arising from the dominant Euro-American society and passed down unabated from generation to generation. The most overt outward causes of intergenerational trauma continued all the way up to the 1960s (Arbogast, 1995), (Helen-Hill, 1995), (Brave Heart, 2003), (Brave Heart and DeBruyn, 1998).

Today, American Indian and Alaska Native people can and do live anywhere on a social spectrum that might run from "traditional" to "acculturated," and everything in-between. A *traditional* person seeks to live through the culture, spirituality, and life-ways of his or her own tribal tradition much as the ancestors might have, modified, of course, by modern life. An *acculturated* person is proud of his or her Native American heritage but has chosen to live in the way of the wider mainstream society. All gradations in-between are taking place today and each person, no matter where they stand, is proud to be a Native American. Those on an addictions recovery path who utilize their cultural ways in intervention, treatment, recovery, and prevention will almost always be people who have chosen to integrate traditions with contemporary life. For example, they might be proficient with computers and also participate in a sobriety sweat lodge. They might have an advanced college degree and be a Sundancer. They might shoot basketball hoops with their children and practice a solitary vision quest under the guidance of a tribal medicine person. They might dance at a powwow in full

⁴The Indian Civil Rights Act of 1968 (ICRA, 1968) guarantees members of recognized Indian tribes many of the civil rights that the U.S. Constitution had affirmed for American citizens starting in 1776. These rights are affirmed for tribal members subject to tribal governments exercising powers of self-governance. These include the free exercise of religion, speech, assembly, and the freedom to petition for redress of grievances. There are a total of eleven constitutional rights listed in Articles 1302 and 1303 of ICRA, 1968. This guarantees tribal members' rights against abuse by their own tribal government; and for the first time in U.S. history affirms individuals' rights specifically as American Indians or Alaska Natives.

⁵The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 with its Peyote Amendment of 1994 (AIRFA, 1978) goes even further than ICRA, 1968 in the guarantee of religious freedom to Native Americans. It states, "On and after August 11, 1978, it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites." The Peyote Amendment in 1994 specifically included the use of the natural peyote cactus as one of the elements of traditional religions.

regalia, while they own their own construction business. They could be students of their own tribal language, and at the same time they could teach algebra in the local high school. They might benefit from the 12 Steps of AA (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1939–2006, pp. 59–60), but presented in a Native cultural context (NAIGSO-AA, 2007). Our discussion will focus on recovery that uses culture to help individuals heal from drug and alcohol use, as well as to heal from the intergenerational and historic trauma that is very likely a deep cause of chemical substance addictions for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

The Role of Culture in Recovery and Healing for Native Americans

The Wellbriety Movement offers an ensemble of interconnected teachings that most tribal people worldwide recognize because their own local traditions are also rooted in holistic ways of life (White Bison, 2002), (Coyhis and Simonelli, August 2006). Each Wellbriety Movement event taking place today sees in attendance participants from many of the over 550 state and federally recognized tribes (Utter, 1993). Each of these tribal groups has its own cultural ways but responds positively to the framework of the Wellbriety teachings. This section is a brief tour through the logical flow of some of the culture-based approach of the Wellbriety teachings.

The Four Laws of Change

We received The Four Laws of Change from an Elder in New Mexico in the mid 1980s. They are some of the deepest roots of the Wellbriety Movement.

The Four Laws of Change state:

- (1) Change is from within.
- (2) In order for development to occur it must be preceded by a vision.
- (3) A great learning must take place.
- (4) You must create a Healing Forest.

Change is from within means that we must have an internal desire to make changes in our lives. We must make a conscious effort to change our intent, our choices, and our behaviors. We need to examine and change our feelings and assumptions about who we are as spouses, parents, family members, and community members. Meaningful change comes from inside us. It cannot be forced from outside the individual or be foreign to the community if it is to have a positive and lasting effect. All permanent and lasting change starts on the inside and works its way out.

In order for development to occur it must be preceded by a vision means that an individual, family, or community must actively discover and share the thoughts, feelings, and images that can take them forward into a healthy future. If there is no vision, there is no development. It must answer the question, “What would our lives, our community, or our nation look like if it were working in a good way?” Starting from this outcome-based approach, the Wellbriety Movement helps each person take the steps to create a better life for self, family, and community. The law of vision ensures that the community’s future will not be an accident. Once the community vision is developed, the spiritual world will then provide a plan of action and guide activities to move toward the vision just created.

A great learning must take place means that everyone needs to be part of the change in order for positive and lasting change to occur. It means that all parts of the cycle of

life—baby, youth, adult, and elder—within a community must participate in simultaneous learning experiences (in their own ways) in order for the community to recover from the effects of alcohol, drugs, and intergenerational trauma. The Great Learning includes the cultivation of personal healing and ongoing self and community knowledge, as well as the education needed in contemporary life. The great learning law must include the individual, the family, the community, and the nation acting in concert as an integrated whole.

You must create a healing forest sums up the Four Laws of Change. It is the basis of the Healing Forest Model of positive community change and is expressed by the healing forest story (Simonelli, Spring 1993), (White Bison, 2002). Suppose you have a hundred-acre forest and in that forest there is a disease or sickness. All the trees are sick. It is a sick forest. Suppose, then, you go to that forest one day and you take one of those sick trees and temporarily uproot it and put it under your arm. You walk down a road and you put it in a nursery where there is good soil. Or, you take a young person. You take them out of the community and put them in treatment. So now you have this tree in good soil, and it becomes healthy because it is getting sun and rain. It is getting well. It is turning green. You get this tree to be well and then you take this well tree back to the sick forest. What happens if you take a well tree back to a sick forest? It gets sick again. It means that we must actively heal the community and its institutions at the same time an individual works on his or her own healing from alcohol and drugs or other unwell behaviors. The individual affects the community and the community affects the individual. They are inseparable from the point of view of addictions recovery. Everything must be in the healing process simultaneously.

The Healing Forest Model

The Healing Forest Model is both an inspiration and a basis for community healing and change programs utilized by both Native and non-Native communities that participate in Wellbriety Movement activities and resources. Alcoholism and other addictions are symptoms. The many social issues associated with alcohol and substance misuse are also symptoms. It is important to address the underlying spiritual and cultural issues that give rise to the *anger, guilt, shame, and fear* that create unhealthy soil in the forest metaphor. These four poisons in the soil of the sick forest lead to the onset of addictive behaviors and are one cause of intergenerational trauma. For American Indians and Alaska Natives, the trauma of the historical period is continually passed down from generation to generation. It is not only a thing of the past (LaDuke, 1997).

For example, one element of historical and intergenerational trauma is the outlawing of Native languages that began in the boarding schools of the late 1870s and extended all the way up to the 1960s. Language carries culture and culture is how a people know themselves as a cohesive unit in a world of social diversity. When Native languages were outlawed, parents transmitted shame-of-language to children, and those children passed it on to their children. Shaming the language, and therefore the culture, created a traumatic element that traveled from generation to generation (Helen-Hill, 1995). Addressing historical and intergenerational trauma is essential in applying the Healing Forest model and healing Native communities. The trees (individuals and institutions) in this model cannot find their spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health until the soil is cleansed. In the well forest, anger, guilt, shame, and fear are replaced by the traditional values of *healing, hope, unity, and forgiveness*.

Medicine Wheel Teachings

Most indigenous societies are guided by circle-based teachings of traditional knowledge having much in common with one another. The Medicine Wheel is a concept from the plains tribes of North America (Four Worlds Development Project, 1984–1989). It refers to circle drawings, concepts, and constructions out of physical media of all kinds expressing tribal culture and spirituality. It is one way of expressing the principles, laws, and values that other tribal peoples know in their own ways.

The Medicine Wheel teaches that the Great Spirit put into place a balanced, cyclic, circle-based system that is still very much with us today. Living beings and their communities are governed by a system of circles and cycles that repeat and renew in ever-changing ways. One of these cyclic principles is the four directions—*east, south, west, and north*. These are compass directions but they are also tendencies in both human life and in the lives of plants, insects, reptiles, and mammals that express *beginnings, growth, maturity, and elderhood* (Coyhis, Summer 1996). The Medicine Wheel teaches about the cycle of life—*baby, youth, adult, and elder*—and the seasons—*spring, summer, fall, and winter*—that express the four directions in a tangible way. It also teaches that there are four directions of human growth—*emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual*, as well as four aspects in our human societies—*the individual, family, community, and nation*. These groups of four principles are always depicted graphically in a circle to suggest that they can take place simultaneously when experienced from the vantage point of the center, which represents the unity of the Medicine Wheel. These circle or cyclically based teachings convey a different sense of life than the linear, ever-rising concepts from the Western worldview.

The Medicine Wheel further teaches that the system the Creator put into place is a *polarity-based system*. We always find plusses and minuses, ups and downs, man–woman, boy–girl, here–there, good–bad, and other expressions of opposite tendencies. For human beings, the polarity-based system is brought into balance by living in harmony with the principles, laws, and values that are at the root of all life. If we go out of balance, the natural laws let us know through feedback in some form of tension, anxiety, or stress, giving us the message that we must come back into balance once again. The addictions' epidemic at this time in both Native and non-Native communities is one signal coming from natural law that human life has fallen out of harmony and balance with the natural principles, laws, and values that make life worth living. People in all cultures historically have used and misused psychoactive substances. Native American societies have especially suffered from misuse of alcohol since World War II, as we described in the first section of this article. The unique approach to recovery to emerge from the Native American experience in North America is that loss of culture and spirituality is one deep cause of Indian alcoholism. This causative factor and the solutions it suggests for Native people may, or may not, be applicable to non-Native societies in a more general way. Native understanding of the “seen” and the “unseen” world is one expression of spirituality that Native people in recovery often respond to.

Both the Medicine Wheel and Native Elders teach that there is a *seen world* and an *unseen world* that govern our lives. The seen world is usually taken to be the physical world, and the unseen world is the spiritual world. We must pay attention to both in order for our societies to remain in balance. At this time in human history, the physical, materialistic, consumer, and mechanistic aspects of human life are coming to dominate most of human life on earth. These are attributes of what we are calling the “seen” world. Indigenous people still in contact with their traditional roots begin to personalize or “own” their own addictions' recovery when aspects of what we are calling the “unseen” world figure prominently in their recovery processes. These might include ceremonies such as the sacred pipe, sweat lodge,

sun dance, vision quest, smudging, tobacco offerings, the Hoop ceremony, and other rituals from their own traditions. Participating in such ceremonies can shift a person into the heart center, which is one attribute of the unseen world. “Recovery from the heart” is a phrase heard in Native American circles suggesting the value of the unseen world in recovery. Yet it must be emphasized that this is not an “either-or” situation—it is “both-and.” Just as we presented modern Native people involved in both traditional and contemporary aspects of living in the last paragraph of the first section of this article. Native people embrace both the seen world and the unseen world, the head and the heart, for full recovery. It is just that heart-centered processes seem to be the key that opens the lock to recovery and then on to Wellbriety for Native peoples.

The Medicine Wheel also teaches that the system that the Creator put into place is an *interconnected system*. Situations taking place are always interdependent, interrelated, and joined. An interconnectedness teaching that has guided many Native people in their search for recovery and healing says, “The honor of one is the honor of all, and the pain of one is the pain of all.” What might this mean? Good things usually come from teams of people working in collaboration with one another. The honor belongs to the larger group. Additionally, if something is disturbed in one part of the system, the disturbance will be felt in distant parts of the system too. For example, we now know that the rise of greenhouse gases or the presence of acid rain, although originating in one location, soon affects the entire earth system. Likewise, the addictions epidemic has left no nation on earth unscathed, thereby illustrating this interconnectedness teaching.

The Medicine Wheel also teaches that *conflict and struggle* are a natural consequence of the polarity-based, interconnected system that we all share in our lives on planet earth. Everything in the universe grows and changes through a process of conflict and struggle. In order for anything to grow or change it must struggle to do so first. Conflict is a natural part of life—it is a friend, not an enemy. One of the great Medicine Wheel teachings of the Wellbriety Movement can be expressed as, “Conflict precedes clarity.” It marvels at how good we feel when we get resolution and come into clarity after a conflict. So, for example, having heard the teaching *conflict precedes clarity*, a person might be heartened to stick with difficult situations in his or her life, or in the community, having confidence that resolution is often possible. This is as much a statement of faith as it is a belief in a literal outcome. It is reinforced when an individual or a community finds even partial resolution to a problem. There are many other Medicine Wheel teachings. By studying and living through the Medicine Wheel teachings we come to know the truth of the intelligent, interconnected system by which the Great Spirit expresses itself in all aspects of our world (White Bison, 2002).

The Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps

Many older Native Americans recovered by utilizing mainstream AA and its 12 Steps. Their recovery often goes back to the sobriety movement that took shape in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Today, some of them are our Wellbriety Elders. By the early 1980s it was possible to introduce a few culture-specific elements into some mainstream AA meetings having Native people in attendance. By the early 1990s a program called the *Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps for Men* was cocreated by White Bison, Inc., and a group of male Indian inmates at an Idaho prison. By the late 1990s the *Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps for Women* came into being in collaboration with female Indian inmates at another Idaho prison. In 2007 *The Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps for Teens* was videotaped in Montana and is now available for our youth.

The Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps is a culturally appropriate approach to the 12 Steps of AA that combines some of the Medicine Wheel orientation with the time-proven 12 Steps of AA. The Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps is offered to Native Americans nationwide by way of one teaching video and workbook especially for men and another for women. There is also a comparable program for boys and girls. It is also presented by way of a book entitled *The Red Road to Wellbriety: In the Native American Way*, sometimes called the “Indian Big Book” (White Bison, 2002). It is taught in the circles of the Firestarter’s grassroots healing program (please see the section entitled, The Firestarter’s Circles) as well as in the Wellbriety for Prisons program and in the 7 Trainings program. The book summarizes one of the main ideas of the Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps when it says, “Time and again our Elders have said that the 12 Steps of AA are just the same as the principles that our ancestors lived by, with only one change. When we place the 12 Steps in a circle then they come into alignment with the circle teachings that we know from many of our tribal ways. When we think of them in a circle and use them a little differently, then the words will be more familiar to us.”

In this culturally friendly use of the 12 Steps, each Step may be worded a little differently than its AA wording, and they are presented in a circle rather than in a straight-line listing. Another innovation in this program is to associate a single principle with each Step. When this is done, Native Americans can often access them more easily because the circle emphasizes the interconnectedness of the 12 Steps. It is also easier because principle-based thinking is often closer to the “big-picture” thinking more familiar to traditional Native people everywhere. Still another breakthrough is the addition of Indian recovery stories in the book. These stories enable the identification at depth that has long been key in mainstream AA. But identification at depth for Native people also means cultural identification.

Traditional Native American Values

When recovery signifies a return to the culture it generally means a return to the traditional values by which the ancestors lived. Many of these are different than Euro-American or Western contemporary values. For example, Native societies value a cooperation ethic rather than one of competition. There is often a right-brained or feeling orientation rather than the left-brained analytical orientation. Life is felt to have a spiritual foundation at every turn, rather than religion being a small segment of life. The relationship to time is harmonious rather than compulsive. And the Native American value of inclusivity is expressed by cultural pluralism.

The Red Road, the Good Mind, and Innate Knowledge

Many Indian people in recovery from addictions or in healing from intergenerational trauma are walking the Red Road. The Red Road is the pathway of traditional knowledge, values, and culture that our ancestors lived by. Gene Thin Elk, a Lakota who has worked in Native healing for many years, defines it this way. He says it is a “. . . holistic approach to mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional wellness based on Native American healing concepts and traditions, having prayer as the basis of all healing” (Coyhis and White, 2006). Walking the Red Road means to avoid the harmful extremes that a life of using alcohol and other drugs brings. It means to pray for personal spiritual power only to be able to give back to the family, community, and nation. It also means to follow the cultural principles, laws, and values in forms that can best be lived today. It offers an individual a lot of latitude in

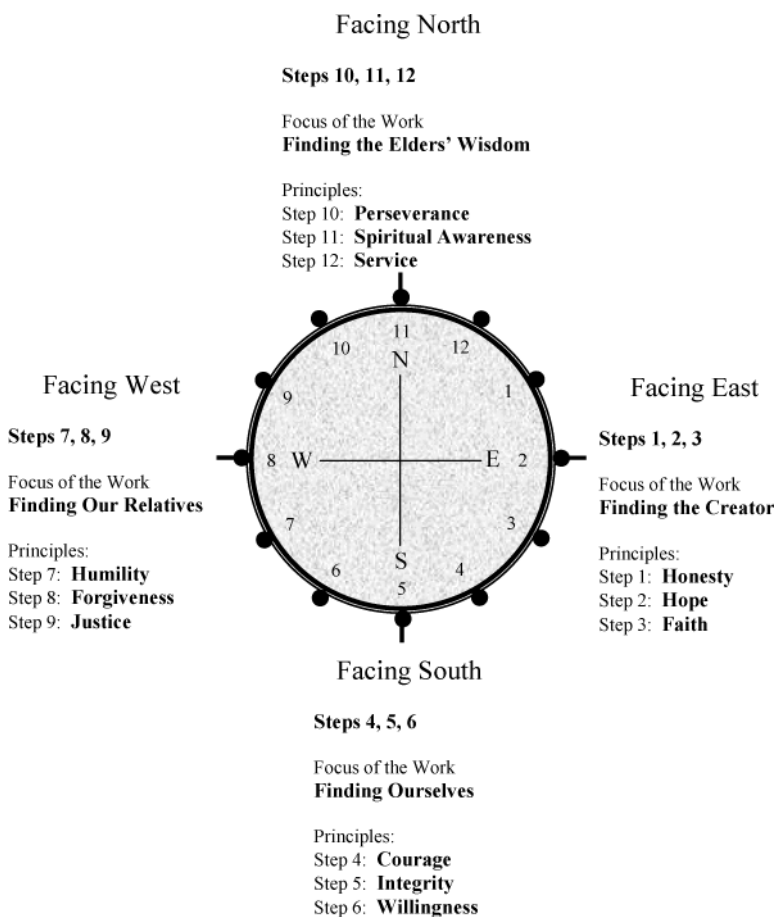


Figure 1. The 12 Steps in a circle.

living his or her life in a good way. One of our teachings states that the Red Road is a wide road—it is not a red line.

Another teaching that inspires many Native people in healing and recovery is that of the Good Mind. The Good Mind is a discipline. It recognizes that we are connected to the good and that we have access to a loving source of good thoughts and feelings. It understands that we have to actually work with our thoughts and feelings on an ongoing basis if we are to live with kindness, compassion, energy, and wisdom. It teaches how to observe thoughts and feelings as a tool for living through the Good Mind. Children among the Six Nations Haudenosaunee or Iroquois people are often told to “use a good mind” to deal with a particular situation in their daily lives, while growing up (Simonelli, Spring 1997).

One of the Wellbriety Movement teachings says, “Inside of every human being is the innate knowledge of your own well-being.” It says we all inherently know how to be a well human being because that knowledge is inside ourselves; it is in our hearts. The only thing remaining is choice. Innate knowledge is like the sun in the sky. We know the sun is always out there in space sending out its rays of light and warmth. But sometimes storm clouds block the sun. We may be out of touch with the sun’s rays, but it doesn’t mean we have to reinvent them or that they are gone. It just means we have to make the right choices in

<i>Traditional Native American Values</i>	<i>Euro-American Contemporary Values</i>	<i>Traditional Native American Values</i>	<i>Euro-American Contemporary Values</i>
1. Cooperation.....	Competition	16. Religion – Way of Life.....	Religion – Segment of Life
2. Group Emphasis.....	Individual Emphasis	17. Spiritual – Mystical.....	Skeptical
3. Modesty, Humility.....	Self-Important	18. Personal Caution.....	Personal Openness
4. Individual Autonomy.....	Interference/Involvement	19. Listening / Observation Skills.....	Verbal Skills
5. Passivity/Calmness.....	Activity / Restlessness	20. Indirect Criticism.....	Direct Criticism
6. Generosity.....	Saving	21. Extended Family.....	Nuclear Family
7. Patience.....	Impatience	22. Cultural Pluralist.....	Assimilationist
8. Non-materialism.....	Materialism	23. No Eye to Eye Contact.....	Eye to Eye Contact Important
9. Work to Meet Need.....	Puritan Work Ethic	24. Self-Exploratory Child Rearing.....	Strict Discipline
10. Time Always With Us.....	Time Use Every Minute	25. Restitution.....	Punishment
11. Orientation to Present.....	Orientation to the Future	26. Character = Source of Status.....	Degree = Source of Status
12. Pragmatic, Practical.....	Theoretical	27. Bilingualism.....	Monolingualism
13. Respect for Age.....	Respect for Youth	28. Illness = Imbalance(s).....	Illness = Physical Issue
14. Right Brain Orientation.....	Left Brain Orientation	29. Belief in the Unseen.....	Belief in the Seen / Proven
15. Cooperate with Nature.....	Control over Nature	30. Respect for Tradition.....	Progress Oriented

Figure 2. Values.

our lives to live moment to moment with what is deep inside ourselves so we can feel the sunlight once again. Just as every salmon knows how to be a salmon, and every bear knows how to be a bear, every human being has the innate knowledge to live in harmony with the principles, laws, and values that bring happiness.

Further Aspects of Recovering Through Culture

The Hoop

An Indian man had a vision in the mid-1990s that led to the sacred Hoop of 100 eagle feathers, now an important element of the Wellbriety Movement. In his vision he saw eagle feathers arriving from all four directions to attach themselves to a willow hoop having the four Medicine Wheel colors—red, yellow, black, and white. These colors also symbolize all four races of humankind. This meant that the healing about to take place was to be a world healing in which everyone would participate. In the days and months after his vision, eagle feathers arrived in every way imaginable. Some came through the mail, some were given as ceremonial gifts, and some were handed to him in restaurants or on airplanes. The Hoop was built in a ceremonial sweat lodge and blessed in a gathering at which Elders from all four directions, and all races, were present. These Elders placed the gifts of *Healing, Hope, Unity, and the Power to Forgive the Unforgivable* into the Hoop. Today, people from all races and walks of life offer prayers in their own way at the Hoop when attending Wellbriety Movement events. The four gifts of the Hoop—Healing, Hope, Unity, and Forgiveness—are available to all of us.

Talking Circle

Throughout Indian country, many recovery and healing activities take place in a traditional talking circle, sometimes called the talking circle ceremony. A talking circle begins when the facilitator offers prayers in both English and in his or her Native language. A smudge of sage, sweet grass, cedar, or a local herb is taken around the circle so that each participant may purify by means of the smoke. The facilitator suggests a topic for discussion, or it may be left open to group conscience. Only one person speaks at a time during a talking circle. There is no crosstalk and no argument. Each person speaks his or her piece from the heart and offers it to the circle. Each participant hears all that is said and either responds directly to something heard, or simply says what he or she needs to say. What takes place in a recovery talking circle is confidential. This traditional form allows weighty things to find voice in a sacred manner.

Mind Maps

Those following the Wellbriety healing approach often utilize mind maps, either individually or in a group process in order to air issues of importance. Mind maps are nonlinear, circle-based drawings allowing what one is thinking or feeling to be expressed on a sheet of paper for all to see and share. Mind maps are used during problem-solving workshops at conferences and meetings so that an individual and the group as a whole can learn what it is thinking and feeling as a prelude to community action. The mind-mapping process is energetic and dynamic because information emerges from the right brain and the heart center. Once on the table, the more analytic, left-brained tools may be utilized as needed.

The use of mind maps is also central to working the Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps program for individual healing and recovery (Wellbriety!, 2006).

The Firestarter's Circles

Each local community can come together for learning experiences in the Wellbriety approach to Native American healing by way of grassroots Firestarter's Circles. The name "Firestarter" comes from the desire to create a "fire" of healing consciousness and activities in one's community. The Firestarter's approach is taught in a 3-day training workshop. Key to the Firestarter's circles is active involvement in the Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps approach on the part of each participant. The ceremonial practices of smudging, the talking circle, and appropriate spiritual expression are utilized. Each Firestarter's circle is encouraged to utilize its own traditional tribal or regional ways whenever appropriate, thus allowing self-determination through "ownership" of the meeting. The number of Firestarter's circles taking place around North America has varied as people come and go. White Bison, Inc. trains about 100 Firestarters a year. About 800 people were trained as Firestarters since the Program formally began in 1999. We have trained about 390 people to conduct various youth and family programs since mid-2004. The oldest continuous Native American sobriety and recovery group utilizing the Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps approach is still active in London, Ontario, and goes back to 1996.

Giving Back

Giving back to the community is stressed right from the beginning in many Native American healing approaches today. Individuals are encouraged to enter the circle of community at whatever level they can. Whether finding a role in a community-based Firestarters group, or playing a part in a healing and wellness coalition, the principle of, "In order to keep it, you have to give it away," is alive and well in Indian country.

The Land

Living in harmony with nature, or the land, has always been a part of traditional culture. The Elders helped us to see that a long time ago nature was our trainer. We could see that there was an intelligent system that was running things. That is what we did in the old days. The Elders said that whatever our programs are, before you put them out to the people you have to say, "Is this in harmony with the earth? Is it in harmony with the principles, the laws, and the values?" Some Native recovery and treatment centers today utilize land-based activities to teach traditional healing knowledge to those in recovery. For example, a participant might spend time living in a tipi out in a tribal buffalo pasture in order to observe how relationships take place in the buffalo nation. This might help his or her own domestic violence issues. Gathering saplings, coverings, and stones for a traditional sweat lodge also places a person in contact with the healing energies of the land. Building traditional canoes or preparing to hunt or to fish in keeping with tribal traditions is often worked into local recovery strategies (Coyhis and Simonelli, January 2007).

Culture is Prevention

Culture is prevention is a key principle of modern Native American addiction healing. We tell the story of three sisters who see babies floating down a river. Some are struggling and

some have already passed away. The first sister rushes into the river and begins rescuing them. She grabs those who are still alive and places them on the shore. The second sister rushes into the water and realizes that she could save more of them if she could only train them to swim. She teaches them how to move their arms and legs in the water. But the third sister stops for a minute as she rushes in to help. She wonders why these babies are coming into the river in the first place. Her thoughts are different. She goes upriver to see if she can prevent these babies (our youth and children) from coming into the river of alcohol and drug use. She realizes that teaching these babies their own cultures is a way to keep them out of the river. All three—rescue, training, and prevention are taking place in Indian communities today. We have found that the best addictions prevention initiatives have a cultural basis or inspiration (Wellbriety!, 2007).

Our Teachings are not Theory

Many of our Native people are returning to the cultural orientation and attitudes of their own traditions as a way to implement intervention, treatment, recovery, and prevention of addiction and other harmful behaviors. They are doing this even as they live as part of the wider, dominant society. They are learning to integrate the best of both worlds. They can do this because our cultural ways activate the innate knowledge of how to live as a well person, which is inside each of us. Our teachings are not theory. They are something we know from deep inside and are not subject to the testing, argument, doubt, revision, and need for “proof” that often takes place in the social sciences. They are gifts from the principals, laws, and values that our cultures lived by from a long time ago. For many of us, they are the way of our recovery and healing.

Implications of Native American Healing Approaches

Is the unique orientation of the Wellbriety movement among Native Americans applicable to other community groups? Would some of the principles of Native American healing from either chemical addictions or intergenerational trauma find use in other disenfranchised communities? And what about addictions recovery efforts within the mainstream community—are any of these approaches useful there?

Culture-Specific Versions of the 12 Steps

The culture-specific nature of Native American recovery and healing suggests that other disenfranchised communities could look to their own cultural roots, and especially to their cultural pride, as an ally in addictions recovery. If a particular community has problems with the effective and proven 12-Step approach to recovery, it could present it differently by using its own cultural expressions without losing the essentials. An example of this is a Buddhist expression of the 12 Steps, widely used in that community (Griffin, 2004).

Defining Community Values

If a particular community has a traditional value system, or even just an outlook different than the dominant, mainstream society, it could undertake the vital and exciting task of defining its own values as a starting point for its community-healing prototype. How different values

may be integrated with those of today's world is yet another challenge, just as it is for contemporary Native people.

Healing Symbols

The 100-Eagle Feather Hoop has proven to be a cultural element recognized by the hundreds of unique indigenous cultures in North America and around the world. Other communities could discover a culture-specific symbol to unite their own community and assist addictions recovery at the level of the unseen, or spiritual world.

Other Indigenous Communities

Some of Australia's Aboriginal community has felt the connection between Native American healing approaches and their own desire for cultural survival and sobriety. The Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps approach as well as the Firestarters curriculum has been utilized in Australia.

Marilyn Pittman, an Aboriginal woman from the Yuin Nation of the South Coast in New South Wales, expresses the need for recovery among her people. She says,

Alcohol repeatedly emerged as the overriding issue of concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples. Ninety-five percent of the urban population regards it as a serious problem and 63% regard alcohol or alcohol related violence as the most serious social issue facing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community today. Two thirds (66%) believe it is the cause of the most drug-related deaths in Indigenous communities, and 55% believe it to be the single drug of most concern. Alcohol related crime is nearly twice as prevalent in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community than in the general community. (Wellbriety!, 2004)

She goes on to express her own feelings about recovery as an Aboriginal woman, demonstrating kinship with Wellbriety approaches.

From my own experience of having grown up in the Aboriginal community and the difficulties of an alcoholic family, of having survived active alcoholism myself and having listened to many Aboriginal people in my time," she says, "I believe that sobriety is the major source of strength and survival for Aboriginal peoples. It is the way we break the cycle of addiction and despair and suicide in our communities. It is the way we bring back culture and hope to our communities, and are able to pass on the ways of our old people to the next generation. By sobriety I mean complete abstinence from the use of intoxicating chemical substances. (Wellbriety!, 2004)

Spirituality

A return to spirituality is an important part of the Native American renewal approach (Deloria, Jr., 2006). *Spirituality* is understood to be different from specific religious beliefs, but it can include religious beliefs. Contemporary life has severely undercut a person's identity in his or her spirituality, replacing it with increased reliance on rational,

logical, intellectual, materialistic, secular, and left-brained orientations. The Medicine Wheel teaches that a balance between spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and social elements is necessary for a well life. Each community or group having recovery issues could begin a heartfelt inquiry into what a return to spirituality might mean for their unique orientation.

Cultural Competency

Knowing that culture plays a role in the recovery of Native American clients, treatment centers nationwide could augment their cultural competency by maintaining at least one person on staff having some knowledge of Native American recovery (Treatment Improvement Exchange, 2002). Simply keeping a copy of the book *The Red Road to Wellbriety: In the Native American Way* (White Bison, 2002) on hand at a treatment facility can make a difference for a Native American client. We have heard many stories about how placing this book into the hands of a Native American at a crucial moment has been life changing.

Customizing the Healing Forest Model

The Healing Forest Model teaches that anger, guilt, shame, and fear are poisons that sicken the soil of the community “forest.” For Native Americans, those poisons are slowly eliminated and replaced by forgiveness, healing, unity, and hope in the soil of the well community forest. In this process, “alcoholic trees” become “recovered trees.” Wounded family trees become traditional families. Unwell leadership trees become sober leader trees. Each specific “tree” or community member must work individually on its own healing as one of the subgroups that make up the forest. We feel that a customized version of Healing Forest Model can be applied to many diverse community entities regardless of cultural orientation.

Examples of the Wellbriety Movement in Native Communities

Evidence That it is Working

There is evidence that the many aspects of the Native American healing journey are working. Many thousands of people have participated in Wellbriety activities, events, and learning programs since the early 1990s. In 1996 a Wellbriety-based Native American men’s gathering saw participation of over 1,500 attendees in Colorado. Since 1999 there have been four cross-country Hoop Journeys covering over 20,000 miles to bring the message to thousands of grassroots people that addictions recovery and further wellness are not only possible, but also that people are getting well. White Bison, Inc., has hosted seven national Wellbriety conferences, which saw attendance of over 2,000 participants, total, since the late 1990s. The Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps program has been introduced or taught for Native inmates in hundreds of federal and state prisons since 1997. We are proud of the many positive healing outcomes made possible by grassroots Native Americans in recovery. We will mention three such outcomes here.

Wellbriety Kooteeyaa Totem Pole. We are proud of what our Firestarters accomplish in their home communities. Firestarter Roberta Kitka (Tlingit) of Sitka, Alaska, was inspired to merge some of the Wellbriety healing methods and spirit she’d been learning as a Firestarter



Figure 3. The Wellbriety Kootteeyaa totem pole stands on the SEARHC campus in Sitka, Alaska after its raising on October, 14, 2006.

with her own tradition and community in Alaska. In 2004 after a number of years as a Firestarter, she began an effort in Sitka that culminated in the raising of a traditional Tlingit totem pole called Wellbriety Kootteeyaa on October 14, 2006 (Wellbriety!, 2006). The project was generously sponsored by SEARHC, the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, a major provider of health services to the entire community in the Sitka region. The totem pole now rises proudly on the SEARHC campus for all to see. The Wellbriety Totem pole is a statement that recovery from alcohol and drugs, as well as healing from other diverse health problems is possible. It is a vivid symbol that the healing journey can be a partnership between the intertribal Wellbriety effort and a local or regional tradition.

The Wellbriety Movement of the Ojibwe. Wellbriety advocate Marlin Farley (Ojibwe), helped bring Wellbriety healing ways to the Ojibwe tribes of Minnesota. Beginning with efforts on the White Earth Reservation, the movement now includes active involvement of the Leach Lake and Red Lake reservations, as well as other Ojibwe people of the region. Now the Wellbriety Movement of the Ojibwe offers the White Bison *Sons of Tradition* and *Daughters of Tradition* Programs to tribal youth, as well as the all-encompassing *Seven Trainings* at which all segments of the community may experience learning activities tailored to their own needs. A number of the local Ojibwe tribal groups have also participated in the *Coalitions As Clans* program, which teaches groups to work in concert for the healing of all the people. They also have a *Warrior Down* program taking place to support their people when they come back to the community from prison or from drug and alcohol user

treatment programs. And of course, Ojibwe healing activities include those arising wholly from local approaches and needs.

The Wellbriety Movement of the Ojibwe made the news in March of 2006 when Minnesota Public Radio featured the local Native efforts in healing in both a radio feature and as an Internet print-based feature article (Minnesota Public Radio, 2006). This was a breakthrough in Indian-media relations because a positive, proactive wellness story was made accessible for all to hear and to read. It countered the tendency of the media to only cover negative Indian stories. In June of 2007 Marlin Farley, with Painted Sky Productions and Novamation Studios, released a DVD video about underage drinking entitled, "Our Culture is Prevention." This DVD production introduces for the first time in video media what this key concept of Native American and Alaska Native recovery and healing means at the grassroots community level (Our Culture Is Prevention, 2007).

The Montana Prison System. The Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps program were introduced to inmates at the Montana State Men's prison in 2000, and to the Montana State Women's Prison in 2003. The men's program in 2000 was taught by means of the men's video and workbook. A recent report by the University of Montana at Missoula regarding the men's program stated the following:

Native American participation in chemical dependency treatment increased during the period of study—implicit here is that this increase was due to an expanding and popular Medicine Wheel Program. Of the inmates discharged from prison after successfully completing treatment in each of the two years studied, the vast majority reported no drug usage after six months and again after one year; only a very small portion of the sample reported re-arrest or parole violation. Since Medicine Wheel constitutes a portion of the prison's chemical dependency program, some of the reported success can be attributed to Indian inmates who successfully completed the Medicine Wheel program. (Montana Women's Prison, 2004)

By 2003, the Red Road to Wellbriety Book had been published. Programs for learning at the Montana Women's prison now included the video and program workbook for women as well as the new Wellbriety book. The University of Montana study on the women's program concluded,

The vast majority of inmates (94.1%) had a prior arrest. More than half (66.7%) had served time in jail or prison as a result of a prior arrest. Among those completing Medicine Wheel (and the 12 Steps) treatment, the percentage of inmates with conduct violations decreased after treatment. Inmates who completed Medicine Wheel treatment had lower rates of recidivism than those in the comparable non-treatment group. Native American inmates seem to benefit more from Medicine Wheel treatment. (Montana Women's Prison, 2004).

Closing Words

The Elders explained to us that every forest has two parts, the seen world and the unseen world. If you look underground at the roots you'll see that alcohol is not the cause of something, it is the symptom of something. There is usually something else that goes with many of the problems we are wrestling with. One of our teachings says you can be in one of two states of mind. One is, "I don't know what I don't know." The other is, "Now I know

Table 1
Twelve teachings from the Wellbriety movement

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1. The honor of one is the honor of all; the pain of one is the pain of all.
 2. In order for anything to grow, it must struggle to do so first.
 3. All permanent and lasting change starts on the inside, then works its way out.
 4. Conflict precedes clarity.
 5. Healing takes place when we want to, choose to, like it, and love it.
 6. We move toward and become like that which we think about. If we move toward and become like that which we think about, then isn't it time to begin thinking about what we are thinking about?
 7. We can be in one of two states of mind: (1) I don't know what I don't know. (2) Now I know what I don't know. If we can get from (1) to (2) we can begin to solve our problems.
 8. The leadership systems currently in place too often look at us as our *doing*, and they say *do* differently in order to change. But the Indian way says were not human doings, were human *beings*. If we want to change the *doing* in leadership, I need to change my being. And the way to change my being is to change my intent.
 9. They need our love the most when they deserve it the least.
 10. Declare healing, not war, on alcohol and drugs. It is not a war on drugs; it is a healing journey!
 11. Inside of every human being is the innate knowledge of his or her own well being.
 12. The Creator doesn't so much expect you to be successful as he expects you to be faithful.
-

what I don't know." When you know what you don't know that is hopeful—then we can begin to fix it (see Table 1).

The Elders helped us to know what we didn't know. They told us about all the reasons that our communities went out of harmony. They included historical trauma, the boarding schools, intergenerational trauma, internalized oppression, and more. Now we are left with a layer of anger, a layer of guilt, a layer of shame, and a layer of fear at our roots. But we also know that the way to heal this is with the four gifts of the Hoop: Healing, Hope Unity, and Forgiveness. We heal the anger, guilt, shame, and fear with our traditions, culture, and spirituality. The way we start to deal with this is to begin to form our circles to start to talk and to start to share. The knowledge that we have to have is within us. This journey that we have to make is not about the white man, it is not a white man's problem, it is not about the BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs), it is not about the government. All those things we talk about that happened to our people *did* happen. But this is a journey that we must make ourselves in our communities as Native people.

A long time ago in our precontact historical past we didn't have babies coming down the river. We didn't have suicide or unintended pregnancies anywhere close to the degree we have today. In North America, we didn't have this issue of drinking. Something happened. The Elders explained to us that if you put the culture upriver and teach culture to the babies, the children, and the parents, then that flow of people in distress would stop coming down the river. There is something we must not whisper any more in our Native communities; there is something we must say louder and louder and louder because it represents survival for our people. We are honored to have been able to share some of what that is with you in

this article and to say it in its most simple way—our culture is prevention. We invite you to make contact if you or your community would like to learn more.

RÉSUMÉ

L'Expérience Curative Américaine Indigène

La récupération de dépendance à l'alcool et à d'autres drogues a lieu avec l'aide des méthodes spécifiques à la culture dans les communautés indigènes d'Indien d'Amérique et de l'Alaska en Amérique du Nord. Ces communautés utilisent beaucoup des stratégies de récupération qui représentent les 'meilleures pratiques' professionnelles d'aujourd'hui mais elles emploient également leurs propres forces culturelles et ethniques comme partie importante de leur récupération de la toxicomanie. Le mouvement de Wellbriety parmi les indigènes est de ces expressions curatives qui sont spécifiques à la culture pour les Américains du Nord ayant l'héritage du peuple autochtone. L'appel de rassemblement, "notre culture est la prévention" exprime une approche unique au processus de récupération.

RESUMEN

La Experiencia Curativa Americana Indígena

La recuperación de dependencia al alcohol y a otras drogas tiene lugar con la ayuda de los métodos específicos tiene la cultura en las comunidades indígenas de Indio de América y Alaska en Norteamérica. Estas comunidades utilizan muchas de las estrategias de recuperación que representan los 'mejores prácticas' profesionales de hoy pero emplean también sus propias fuerzas culturales y étnicas como parte importante de su recuperación de la toxicomanía. El movimiento de Wellbriety entre los indígenas es de estas expresiones curativas que son específicas tienen la cultura para los Americanos del Norte que tienen la herencia del pueblo autóctona. La llamada de reunión, "nuestra cultura es la prevención" expresa un único enfoque al proceso de recuperación.

THE AUTHORS



Don Coyhis is the President and founder of White Bison, Inc., Colorado Springs, CO, and a member of the Mohican Nation from the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation in Wisconsin. Since 1988, he has worked actively for addiction recovery of Native Americans. He developed the Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps alcohol recovery program for Native people, as well as numerous other culturally appropriate healing programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives. He is the inspiration behind the Wellbriety healing movement in American Indian communities. He can be reached at don@whitebison.org.



Richard Simonelli, MS, is freelance writer and editor allied with Native Americans in the areas of addictions recovery, education, and traditional knowledge since 1988. He is the communication and media specialist for White Bison, Inc., of Colorado Springs, CO. He has been an editor for *Winds of Change*, the magazine of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society, as well as multicultural editor for *Well Nations*, a wellness magazine for Native Americans. He can be reached at richsimone@aol.com.

Glossary

- Assimilation*: To be absorbed into the mainstream society in a manner that most of one's own ethnic strengths, values, and customs are forgotten.
- Cultural competency*: Addictions recovery materials, curricula, knowledge, and attitudes that express familiarity and proficiency with the cultural background and traditional orientation of the client they seek to serve.
- Culture-specific*: A recovery resource, teaching, or approach that presents itself in a manner that can speak to or reach an individual having a particular cultural background.
- Disenfranchised communities*: A grouping of people that has been impeded or blocked from having the resources or opportunities they need to thrive in the larger society of which they are part, while still keeping their identity as a unique community. This may be the outcome of racism, sexism, or religious, cultural or ethnic discrimination of some sort.
- Firestarters*: A grassroots, community-based program offering the Medicine Wheel and the 12 Steps healing approach in a manner consistent with Native traditions. Firestarters circles meet in small groups in a community or neighborhood. It is called "Firestarters" to suggest that a "fire" of recovery and healing could take place in the community.
- Historical trauma*: Shock, distress or suffering due to events that took place in the historic past. For Native Americans, pandemic disease, military defeat, loss of lands, culture, and language are examples of historical trauma.
- Innate knowledge*: Something we know in our hearts or deep consciousness before it is altered by the rational, logical, or conceptual mind. Innate knowledge could be called the essence of our natural minds.
- Intergenerational trauma*: Suffering and shock based in events that took place in the past but whose pain and distress have been passed down from generation to generation because they have never properly healed. The symptoms of intergenerational trauma express themselves through harmful events taking place in the present.
- Internalized oppression*: The phenomenon by which an individual or group that has been oppressed by a larger, more powerful group actually believes the oppressive messages that have been used to suppress them. They take them into their own psyche and begin to own them, thereby oppressing themselves without further assistance from the external oppressing group.
- Journey of healing*: A sense of movement or travel in the life of an individual, family, community, or nation leading to a healthier state than before the journey was undertaken. A healing journey may be a set of interconnected processes and events leading to the curing of the wounds of alcoholism, etc.

Medicine Wheel: A symbol in the shape of a circle or a wheel signifying wholeness or holistic understanding. Medicine Wheel teachings express life guidance based on the interconnectedness and relatedness of diverse elements. The term “Medicine” refers to spiritual strength or power.

Recovery: In the field of addictions, recovery signifies a process by which an individual moves out of active drug and alcohol misuse and into a phase of life during which the addictive impulse is managed or comes to an end. In some systems, a former alcoholic or addict remains “always in recovery” to signify his or her commitment to sobriety. In others, individuals understand themselves as “recovered” after a certain point of cure from his or her chemical or other addiction.

Red Road: A holistic approach to mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional wellness based on Native American healing concepts and traditions, having prayer as the basis of all healing (Gene Thin Elk). It signifies a path of life that is inspired by and utilizes traditional Native American ways, attitudes, and customs as guidance and direction.

Seen and unseen worlds: The “seen” world refers to situations that are tangible, visible, and materially based. They might be called “above ground” manifestations. They could be considered the outcome of more subtle causes. The “unseen” world refers to the reality of subtle, nonmaterial, or spiritual forces. They are situations that might be considered to be “underground.” Principles, laws, and values of all kinds could be included in the unseen world. A tree is an example of something in the seen world, while its roots are in the unseen world.

Significant event: Referring to addictions recovery, a significant event takes place when an individual experiences a deep insight into his or her misuse of chemical substances, causing the desire for recovery and the start of that process.

Smudging: The ceremonial burning of sacred plants and herbs so that the smoke will provide a blessing to individuals, objects, or events. Sage, cedar, and sweet grass are typical herbs utilized for smudging.

Talking circles: A Native American meeting or group format at which individuals sit in a circle of chairs, or in a circle format on the ground. During group process, individuals speak one at a time without interruption. The arrangement is both ceremonial and communicative in nature, initiated and concluded by prayer or smudging.

Wellbriety: A word meaning to be both sober and well. It suggests going beyond ordinary sobriety and abstinence from addicting substances or processes (i.e., gambling, sex, food, relationships, etc) to a life of deeper wellness than might be found in sobriety or abstinence from a harmful condition alone.

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