

Talking Circle



Talking Circles have been utilized by tribal communities in many states and Canada for as long as anyone can remember. A sacred symbol such as an Eagle Feather, Talking Stick, Stone, or other sacred object is passed in a circle from person to person. The main protocol or ground rule is that only true words can be shared by the person who holds the sacred object, the person can talk as long as they want, and only the person holding the symbol is allowed to talk. A Talking Circle usually begins with an opening prayer (which might include a prayer song), instructions are given on how the circle will be conducted, and the circle is concluded with a prayer and perhaps a traditional song. Talking Circles have been described as equal to, or even more powerful, than therapy groups conducted in non-Indian treatment settings.

TARGET POPULATION: All

RISK FACTORS ADDRESSED:

Community DOMAIN

- ❖ Community laws and norms favorable to towards drug use, firearms, and crime (Historical Trauma and termination).
- ❖ Addresses low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization.

FAMILY DOMAIN

- ❖ Family conflict
- ❖ Family history of the problem behavior.
- ❖ Family management problems
- ❖ Favorable parental attitudes in involvement in the behavior

PROTECTIVE FACTORS ADDRESSED:

- ❖ Bonding
- ❖ Healthy beliefs and clear standards
- ❖ Individual characteristics
- ❖ Interpersonal relationships

IOM Strategies

- ❖ Prevention
- ❖ Treatment
- ❖ Aftercare

KEY ELEMENTS:

Historical Recognition

- Traditions and songs
- Elders teaching songs, prayers & protocol
- Traditional opening
- Community involvement
- Intertribal participation

Process

- Gathering place
- Transportation for drummers
- Community support for financial needs
- Organizational support
- Coordination of participants and volunteers

Materials

- Talking stick, Eagle feather, rock/stone or other sacred symbol

OPTIONAL ELEMENTS:

- ❖ Food
- ❖ Elder participation
- ❖ Transportation for participants

Resources and/or Examples: Most tribes in Oregon have conducted Talking Circles in their communities.

EXAMPLE OUTCOMES:

EDUCATIONAL:	Increase knowledge of cultural songs and prayers
ATTITUDINAL:	Identification of participants to their culture.
BEHAVIORAL:	Develop a healthy lifestyle

Approval Date_____