

Dr. Martin Brokenleg

Preferred Topics

Reclaiming Youth at Risk

For thousands of years, American Indian cultures nourished respectful and courageous children without employing punitive discipline. Now, recent youth development research is revealing the essential elements in raising confident, caring children. Drawing on his research with Drs. Larry Brendtro and Steve Van Bockern in their book, *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*, Dr. Martin Brokenleg presents information on the Circle of Courage which offers concrete strategies for creating environments in which all young people can grow and flourish.

Growing Your Own Kids

Parenting is not for the faint of heart. Parents face challenges today that are age old; keeping our children safe and connected to those who love them, keeping them physically and spiritually healthy, supporting their learning and growth, and empowering them to live productive lives. In this session we review parenting challenges, the need for diverse parenting styles and examine the way parents and communities can help kids grow to be their best through the lens of the Circle of Courage. The picture frame for this session includes the songs, dances and stories of Aboriginal life. These are the tools that make learning an experience of the heart.

Creating a Positive Youth Culture

Currently, many strategies are based on cultural views of youth that are negative. For example punishment is used instead of discipline to teach children. This session explores specific strategies in classroom management and parenting techniques that demonstrate a youth-positive environment.

Building Strengths – Early Childhood

Those who work with young children have the best opportunity to lay the foundation of experiences that strengthen a child from within. The Circle of Courage philosophy operates at the level where all children are alike regardless of the ethnic community from which they come. Positive youth culture works, and research documents that positive approaches are effective in actually helping children.

The Eagle: an example of Aboriginal Spirituality from the Prairies

One of the hallmarks for recovering strength in Aboriginal healing is the revival and utilization of traditional ceremonies. This session develops models that support non-Aboriginal understanding of the ancient spiritual traditions from the prairies. The models will be used to explore the spiritual experiences of Aboriginal people historically and into present times.

Mobilizing Communities

Some populations display complex social patterns that are the result of history. Aboriginal youth display inter-generational trauma but usually receive symptom treatment. The Circle of Courage transforms the foundation conditions for Native or any other youth. Returning to traditional Aboriginal ways of raising youth will restore youth to the heart and mindset that supported survival of indigenous peoples through many centuries.

Culture in the Classroom

"I teach content."

"I treat all my students alike."

"Any student can learn my subject area."

These statements are signs of a teacher who does not see the importance of cultural skills in the classroom. Find out what you can learn to make your classroom effective and fair for today's students. Aboriginal students are the miner's canaries of your classroom when it comes to culture in the classroom.

Culture and Helping

Human service providers know clients inside and out... or do they? Cross cultural skills are crucial for youth workers and yet there is a mystery to culture. Learn what research says about helping professions and hear what suggestions might support your work with diverse populations.

The Goals of Life

This inspirational session is an exploration of the philosophy of life through studying the spiritual goals of the people of "Dances with Wolves." Drawn from tribal wisdom, Dr. Brokenleg addresses the spiritual dimension of contemporary youth problems and powerful, proven strategies for connecting with young people.

The Effect of Family Experience on Resiliency

Family life is the foundational strength in resiliency. This session considers the strengths of family life and the needs of youth facing the contemporary youth worker.

At Risk Youth: Difference and Sameness

Youth come from many different cultures in Canadian society and yet professionals are often trained to think of all youth as alike. What is culture? How does the school experience affect culturally diverse youth? How do youth workers respond to youth who are different in significant ways? We will explore these questions to begin serious dialogue about useful approaches to youth.

The Spiritual Needs of Youth

Resiliency is the work of creating strength inside youth. Tending the heart of youth requires careful consideration by adults. This session explores the universal interior needs inside every young person and suggests techniques for effective strategies to create growth toward strong adult lives for youth. Strategies are appropriate for classroom teachers, youth support workers, and childcare workers.

Talking Circles as Spiritual Tools

The major task of resiliency is to create inner strength in youth. The ages old First Nations activity of the Talking Circle is a tool now used by a variety of support groups to promote spiritual growth. In this session, Dr. Brokenleg discusses how to use talking circles in schools and other youth work to create strong youth.

Reaching Deeper: Touching a Student's Inner World

From Parker Palmer to the Dalai Lama to the brain science of neurobiology, adults are pondering the importance of tending the inner world of children and youth. Native peoples have traditions which enhance and explore the inner world of youth regardless of that youth's values. Current resiliency strategies create inner strength in children and youth. This session develops a theory of creating inner strength in children and youth and explores specific activities adults can use in classrooms and residences to help children grow on the inside.

Restoring Spiritual Balance among Native Peoples

The pressure to acculturate Native people into Western modes caused significant spiritual imbalance among most First Nations. This session reviews some of that history, demonstrates contemporary Native responses, and suggests new understandings of Aboriginal identity and wholeness.

Intergenerational Trauma

Some populations display complex social patterns that are the result of history. Aboriginal youth display intergenerational trauma but usually receive symptom treatment. The Circle of Courage transforms the foundation conditions for Native or any other youth.

Defining Culture

Culture is a defining trait of many populations, Aboriginal people being one of them. This session explores a working definition of culture by utilizing examples of cultural dynamics. North Americans assume we are more alike than different when the living reality may not support that assumption.