



# Fathers of Tradition

Fathers of Tradition is a culturally oriented educational program that develops the fathering skills of Native American men. This is a cognitive, behavioral and spiritual program. Life skills are embedded in each of the sessions. Ceremonial activities such as sweat lodge and smudging, drumming and singing may be included as part of the local cultural practices. Teachings of the Elders provide the foundation for the curriculum. Specific processes include talking circles, mind mapping, mentoring, experiential learning, traditional story telling, cultural practices and service learning make up the core elements of the curriculum.

The men work together in a circle to address issues of Native American identity, what it means to be a Native American man and the role of fathering in Native American culture. Of particular importance

in this program is the emphasis on healing the effects of intergenerational trauma, developing skills and confidence as fathers, and defining a lifeway that is healthy, and balanced emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually.

There are three six month phases to this program: Phase 1: Native American men, age 18 and up meet weekly for 24 weeks to view and discuss the 12 videos in the series, participate in the talking circles, and complete the structured curriculum. Phase 2: During this phase, the men each bring a youth, age 8-17, to mentor. The youth and the men go through the 24 week program again, this time with the men acting as mentors for the youth. Phase 3: In the last phase, community Elders are invited to participate as spiritual guides as the men and youth go through the program again. This time the emphasis is on weaving the local cultural traditions, stories, and language into the elements of the curriculum.



## The curriculum for this program includes:

- Facilitator Manual
- Participant Manual
- 7 Philosophies for Native American Men
- 2 Wellbriety Movement Videos
  - The Sacred Hoop Journey
  - Conducting Talking Circles

### 10 Life Skills videos on the following topics:

- Overview: Fathers of Tradition
- What it was Like
- The Four Laws
- The Cycle of Life
- Co-Dependent Communities
- The Thought Process
- Self-Talk
- Role of the Protector
- Positive Warrior
- 7 Philosophies
- Innate Knowledge
- Comfort Zones

