



# Sons of Tradition

*A Prevention Education Program  
for 13-17 year old Native American Youth*

**Purpose:** A program that provides a character-building framework that will enable youth (age 13-17) to create healthy identities for themselves as young Native American men.

**Background and Theory:** This curriculum was designed using traditional Native American teachings. These teachings have been handed down by Elders in many Native American communities. They are based upon the natural laws, principles, and values that govern the Earth. Sometimes they are called the teachings of the “Good Mind” or the “Original Instructions.” We have identified these teachings as The Teachings of the Medicine Wheel.

## **Objectives:**

As a result of this facilitated year long training, the boys will

- ◆ Learn how their own cultural traditions and ceremonies can provide a framework for healthy lifestyles
- ◆ Learn how culture and spirituality create the pathway to meaning in our lives.
- ◆ Learn how to draw upon their own innate knowledge to make healthy decisions
- ◆ Understand how the various aspects of respect can provide them with a set of values for living
- ◆ Learn how to express their feelings, hopes, dreams and fears both in writing and in safe talking environments
- ◆ Learn from elders, peers and community members about ways to recognize, avoid, and get help for problems that they see or experience
- ◆ Explore the three questions for this developmental stage: Who am I? Why am I? and Where am I going?
- ◆ Know what it is like to belong to a healthy group and participate in healthy thinking and healthy activities

## **Expected outcomes:**

As a result of participating in this year long program boys will

- ◆ Become aware of and be able to discuss their feelings
- ◆ Learn to apply the teachings and principles of healthy living to their own lives
- ◆ Recognize healthy behavior and learn how to avoid unsafe situations
- ◆ Understand the meaning of anger, guilt, shame, and fear
- ◆ Understand and apply spiritual values to their lives and experience healthy lifestyles, strong character and a sense of harmony as a result
- ◆ Learn how to engage in talking circles that encourage sharing experiences, exploring new concepts and learning how to help each other





## Curriculum

### 1. The Son's Booklet

Provides worksheets and resource materials to coincide with the mindmapping themes, the videos and a variety of prevention topics.

2. Mind mapping posters The posters contain teachings that guide the lessons for this program. The posters are explored, mindmapped and then discussed in relation to the materials in the booklet. Two posters are completed each month. There are three sets of posters: one set of values (respect, honesty, loyalty, commitment and tolerance), one set on the Seven Philosophies, and one set called Grandpa Says, based upon the teachings of the Elders.

3. Seven Philosophies Booklet: The Seven Philosophies were developed at the Men's Gathering in 1996, from the presentations that Elders gave explaining what it means to be a Native American man for the 21st Century. There is a philosophy for each of the following: for women, for children, for family, for community, for the Earth, for the Creator, and for "myself." The boys will explore one of these each week and apply the principles to their own lives. In addition, the boys will write out a philosophy for their own lives based upon each of the seven areas and make a commitment to that philosophy.

4. Sons of Tradition Videos (1 &2): These videos feature Elders and youth speaking about the importance of values and meaning in one's life. They also provide a basis for understanding the role and identity of young Native American men. In addition, they provide a set of teachings that support the Posters and the Seven Philosophies.

5. Cycle of Life Video: This video explains the Cycle of Life teachings and presents the 8 thought patterns and 8 feelings.

6. Talking Circle Video: This video describes three different ways to conduct talking circles and how to engage the boys in the learning process of the talking circles.

