



# INTEGRATING TRADITION AND CULTURE INTO WELLNESS COURT PROGRAMMING

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Photo courtesy of Spirit of Change Magazine

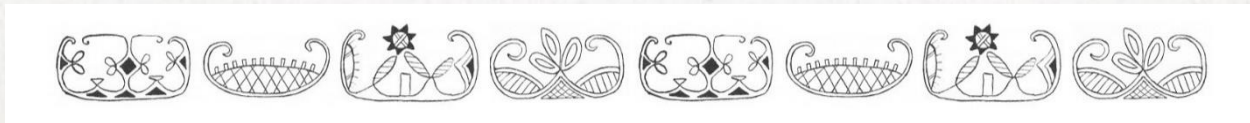
# WHAT I HOPE TO SHARE

- Creative ways to incorporate culture into your Healing to Wellness Court
- Our experiences with our changes
- The importance of participants reconnecting with their culture and community
- How to break the cycle of alienation through cultural and community engagements



# 4 FOUNDATIONAL TENANTS

- Criminal Behavior isn't the Problem; Substance Abuse isn't the Problem; The problem is unresolved trauma- personal and historical for which an individual is self medicating.
- Psychological studies confirm that behavioral change does not occur with negative reinforcement. Behavioral change only occurs with positive reinforcement.
- Behavioral change only occurs with Commitment not Compliance.
- Alienation drives Addiction.



# THE PENOBSCOT NATION IS LOCATED ON INDIAN ISLAND IN THE PENOBSCOT RIVER NORTH OF BANGOR, MAINE

The Tribal Census of 2022 is 2374 members. Indian Island includes a population of 577 which includes:

- 75% Penobscot Members
- 3% Other Indian Residents
- 22% Non-Indian Residents



# SEATING & PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT IN COURT REVIEWS

Allows them to give positive feed back and have their voice be heard. It can be very powerful and moving!

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**





## SMUDGE AND PRAYER

Each court session one of the cultural advisors leads with a smudge, prayer, and one of the 7 Grandfather teachings.



## CULTURAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Having a team member from this department allows us to incorporate language, more ceremonies and traditional arts.



# RENAMING THE PHASES TO MEDICINES

## BEFORE

- Phase I- New Beginnings
- Phase II-Personal Responsibility
- Phase III-  
Cooperation/Accountability/Integrity
- Phase IV-Completion/Continuing  
growth and wellness

## AFTER

- ***Tobacco***-often considered the medicine of the East, the direction of new beginnings. *Tobacco always comes first.*
- ***Cedar***-often considered the medicine of the South, often considered a medicine that protects and purifies.
- ***Sage***- often considered the medicine of the West, its smoke is used to release whatever is troubling the mind, removes negative energy, prepares us for ceremonies and teachings.
- ***Sweetgrass***- often considered the medicine of the North, which is also the direction associated with Elders and Wisdom.





## **GATHERING SWEETGRASS**

Participants learned how to locate sweet grass, how to clean it and its cultural purpose.



## BASKETRY WORKSHOP

Participants were able to learn about the ash tree, work with sweetgrass and weaved an ash/cedar bark basket with Penobscot basket maker.

# DRUM MAKING WORKSHOP







## **CANOE PADDLE HONORING MAINE NATIVE VETERANS**

Members of the team, participants and community members were able to paddle around Indian Island carrying the flags honoring Maine Native Veterans Day.



## SHAWL & RIBBON SHIRT MAKING

Each participant is offered to make with me a piece of regalia upon commencement.



## GIVE BACK PROJECT

Participants are required in the Sage Phase to engage in a give back project in order to advance into Sweetgrass.





## COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

We include the big drum,  
welcome leadership, have a feast  
as well as welcome family and  
friends to the ceremony.

# **MAKE YOUR HEALING TO WELLNESS COURT FIT YOUR COMMUNITY, VALUES AND TRADITIONS.**

- The greatest part of working for your community is the ability to be creative, make a difference and see the change in how members view the road to recovery.
- Phases from numbers to medicines
- Sitting in a circle for the Court review
- Ceremonies as frequent as possible
- Including cultural teachings as part of regaining identity

**THANK YOU!**