

SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION



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Background—In 1999 Southcentral Foundation (SCF) developed Family Wellness Warriors Initiative (FWWI), a prevention program with a unique approach to address the needs of adult survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and child abuse/neglect. This is a culturally centered resiliency model aimed to reduce the cycle of abuse in the Native community and has been a successful program as indicated by the Family Environment Scale and extensive evaluation measures.

The Program—FWWI offers hope, teaches the skills, and provides tools necessary to effect change. We work (by request) with each community to gain the trust and commitment of the tribal and community leadership targeting prevention at individual, family and community levels through intensive training and education. Thoroughly grounded in traditional values; using Alaska Native strengths to break the silence; the goal of the FWWI program is to **end domestic violence, child sexual abuse and child neglect in the State of Alaska in this generation!** This centers on a faith-based curriculum to address core issues arising from abuse for the purpose of spiritual and emotional wellness. Skills are taught to understand how to help those who have experienced domestic violence, abuse, and/or neglect; tools are given to deal effectively with pain, disappointment and hardship; training provides techniques to safely enter conflict all of which invite healthier, interpersonal relationships.

PROGRAM TYPE:

Education and Training providing skills and tools for people to effect change in family violence and child maltreatment.

TARGET POPULATION:

Alaska Native/American Indian people, adults in the helping professions: natural helpers, community or tribal leaders; in addition to parents/adults with histories of harm, and/or at-risk for extending child abuse/neglect.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS:

Education and Training
Community Leadership Development
Parent Education and Support Groups
Family/Community Support
Technical Assistance

WHAT – Types of Trainings

FWWI offers several training options: Beauty for Ashes (BFA), Arrigah House (AH), Advanced Leadership Education and Training (ALET) and tailored workshops (based on who requests it):

Beauty for Ashes (BFA) - A five-day, four-night intensive training designed to educate and train Natural Helpers to use culturally appropriate means to work with individuals and communities impacted by violence. This training is held locally and is designed to host approximately 100 -150 people.

Arrigah House (AH) - A five-day, four-night intensive training designed to host up to 50 people in rural communities as part of the FWWI 3-Year Model for Alaska Native areas. Upon request, Arrigah House can be customized for other specific groups and communities.

Advanced Leadership Education and Training (ALET) – A nine-day advanced training component of FWWI that provides intensive workshops for individuals who have completed the prerequisite of a minimum of two Arrigah House’s or Beauty for Ashes trainings. ALET teaches advanced group process and provides tools and techniques necessary to become an effective group facilitator. Participants learn the fundamentals of the small group process, including the four stages of group; Practice co-leading small groups under the mentorship of trained group facilitators and practice skills in becoming an effective speaker in the areas of abuse, neglect, and domestic violence.

WHO – Is Providing Services

Present at all FWWI trainings: Presenters, Group Leaders, Care Team and Individualized Care:

Presenters – Each Presenter is selected by the FWWI Training Team. Presenters teach 30 minutes on one of the curriculum topics (i.e. childhood, anger, shame, redemption) and each shares a portion of their personal story applicable to the topic. Prequalification and approval processes are detailed below.

Group Leaders –Have direct interaction and the highest amount of involvement with participants. In order to qualify as a group leader they must progress through a series of referral processes and graduate from ALET. The role of a group leader is to facilitate the small groups. They are not counselors or mental health professionals. They insure:

- each group member has opportunity to participate
- all group members are heard and responded to including the co-leader
- group starts and ends on time
- group guidelines and confidentiality standards are followed
- they model appropriate conduct to group members

Clinical Support - In addition, because discussions surrounding scenarios of domestic violence and sexual abuse can serve as triggers, a clinical support team is always available during trainings. This team functions in two capacities, both as a Care Team (CT) and Individualized Care (IC). Care Team members are assigned to oversee 3 to 4 groups during an event. A CT member provides additional support to participants. They are considered “first responders” when group is in a “stuck” place, or when a leader is struggling. The IC consists of PhD or Masters Level Therapists who are present around the clock during an event for one-on-one support. IC also provides extra support in the development of action plans for participants who are considered to be in a vulnerable place. This may include domestic violence victims who need assistance developing safety plans, mechanisms for safety, and/or exploring options. IC remains available post training and continues providing personalized care by following up with every participant within two weeks of each training.

HOW: Does a Participant Apply?

Initial Referral and Placement: Applicants do not need to have experienced trauma to attend, but must be 21 or older to apply. All are required to fill out an application packet which includes a confidential Pre-Screening Questionnaire reviewed only by the FWWI Clinical Counselors.

The target population is Alaska Native/American Indian people particularly those who have experienced domestic violence, child sexual or physical abuse and/or neglect. FWWI also trains those who desire personal growth in their lives and those in the helping professions who desire to learn how to respond to individuals who have experienced trauma in said areas. FWWI does not discriminate against gender, race, or faith.

APPROVAL PROCESS

IF APPROVED - by FWWI Clinical Staff the applicant is contacted by the Event Staff with the conference fees, a list of materials to bring, travel suggestions, directions and registration times, etc.

IF Initially DENIED –The Clinical Staff will interview the applicant to determine appropriateness of attendance. If the applicant is currently seeing a counselor, an interview with the applicant’s counselor is required to determine appropriateness of attendance. If applicants are screened out they are provided with options more appropriate to their needs and may apply for training in the future.

PRE-TRAINING

PARTICIPANTS - Are selected by the Clinical Staff, based on that individual’s confidential pre-screening information and placed in a small group of six with two FWWI trained Group Leaders. The non-confidential information (i.e. Group Leaders, Care Team and other small group members) is provided to each participant on the day of arrival.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING- BFA and AH each have a three-day training for Group Leaders and Care Team that is held prior to the event. This is preparation time for Group Leader pairs to get to know one another and to prepare for their small group sessions.

TRAINING EVENT

Participants usually arrive the day before the registration and training begins and they depart on the final day of the training. “Kick-off” days typically start with a welcome message, worship and time to meet your small group. The last day of the training usually ends during late afternoon. Each training day following the “Kick-off” usually starts by 8:00 am and ends at 9:00 pm.

The primary activities during training are all on the FWWI campus and consist of large group 30 minute teachings and small group 90 minute sessions.

Large Group 30 Minute Teachings (approximately 3-4 per day)

- Teachings are from an established curriculum - topics such as Anger, Shame, Disappointment and Recovery are taught by trained FWWI Presenters. Personal stories are woven throughout the teachings.
- Drumming / Singing / Native Dance

Small Group Sessions (approximately three per day)

- Each small group contains six participants and two trained group leaders
- Small groups provide an opportunity to share personal stories applicable to the session's teaching topic as well as the opportunity to learn how to respond to others.

Evening activities provided may include, but are not limited to: in-house movies, beading, dance lessons, exercise activities and board games.

POST TRAINING

Post Support: After two weeks each participant's Group Leader is asked to call and "check in" with him/her. The FWWI Training Team schedules quarterly Alumni gatherings and invitations are sent by mail and follow up phone calls are made. The FWWI campus is available to small groups to continue meeting if and when space and time permit outside of trainings.

Participant Advancement: There is a process by which participants are evaluated and recommended for continuation. A participant must go through a BFA or AH as a first step then attend a second training for a total of two events (in any combination of BFA or AH) prior to being considered to attend ALET (as outlined above FWWI Counselors also evaluate Alumni who may be ready for advanced training.

Post ALET: FWWI Counselors determine who is ready to lead and how that individual will serve in a leadership role. Not everyone who graduates from ALET will be a leader for FWWI.