

Circles of Healing and Justice

14th National Indian Nations Conference: Justice for Victims of Crime

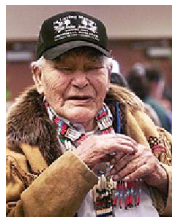


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*“.....Same thing with the tribal court.
That came in long before white people.
The court brought everything out in
the open, before the people. They
talked to the person making trouble
right in front of him. They just talk.
As peaceful as they can. The Indian
way is to have respect for one
another.”*



Traditional Chief Peter John
Minto 1900 - 2003

“The circle is a ‘journey of a journey.’ It is a process to ‘see’ you and to learn about yourself. The circle is a process of learning with your heart, mind, and spirit....As you pass the feather around the circle, you have the responsibility of learning.....The vision that we have of the circle is to teach people to change, to grow, to be open to life, to be open to all of their relations on earth.”



*Yupik Elder Dr. Rita Blumenstein
Traditional Healer
Doorway to a Sacred Place
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium*

“Circle peacemaking is probably the most powerful process that I’ve ever gone through for healing, for my own healing.....Circle peacemaking has come to our village as an answer to our prayers.”



**Mike Jackson
State Magistrate
Tribal Peacemaker
Kake, Alaska**

Justice Circle Process

◆ Opening the Circle

- A prayer, words from an Elder, or any other meaningful way to signal the opening
- The Circle facilitator describes what the situation is, generally describes the process, outlines the guidelines for speaking
- Going around the Circle for introductions



◆ Phase one: Passing an object around several times

- Talking about the situation and persons involved
- Giving information about the situation and persons involved
- Describing feelings about the situation and persons involved
- Giving advise or counseling to the offender and victim if the victim is participating in the circle



◆ **Phase two: Passing an object around several times**

- Talking about the solution.....writing ideas on paper chart
- Coming to consensus on the sentence



◆ **Closing the Circle**

- May be a prayer, words from an Elder, the Circle leader may offer closing words, or any other meaningful way to signal the closing



Circle Guidelines

- ◆ Each community may set their own guidelines, but the most basic ones may include:
 - Be respectful of each other in the way you speak
 - Speak from the heart
 - Listen from the heart
 - Everyone is equal
 - Traditional values



Traditional Alaska Native Values – Generalized Native Way of Life = Creating Balance

- ◆ Respect for Elders and of one another
- ◆ Stewardship and respect of land, sea, and all nature
- ◆ Practice culture and traditions
- ◆ Subsistence, food security
- ◆ Listen with heart and mind
- ◆ Speak with care
- ◆ Live by honesty, sharing, caring, fairness, unity
- ◆ Never give up
- ◆ Spirituality, reverence for Creator
- ◆ Maintain a balance in life, moderation
- ◆ Respect for knowledge
- ◆ Avoid conflict
- ◆ Practice sharing and cooperation
- ◆ Give service to others through compassion, love and sharing
- ◆ Don't be greedy, boastful, lazy, steal or lie
- ◆ Be happy, humor

