

# Healing of the Canoe:

## A Culturally Based Preventive Intervention to Reduce Substance Use Among American Indian Youth

<http://healingofthecanoe.org/>





In the beginning....

*"If the research you are proposing to do doesn't benefit the community, then it's not research worth doing here."*

Tribal Elder



# Healing of the Canoe: Background

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# What Is Healing of the Canoe

The Healing of the Canoe, which uses the traditional canoe journey as a heuristic and metaphor, provides tribal youth the skills they need to travel their life's journey without being pulled off course by alcohol or drugs, using tribal values, traditions, and culture as compass to guide them and anchor to ground them.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waQ4eK7wfb8&feature=youtu.be>

# Healing of the Canoe: A Brief History

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## NIMHD-Funded CBPR Grant: Three Competitive Phases

- **Phase I – Suquamish, ADAI**
  - Relationship building, needs/strengths assessment, literature review, adapt and pilot curriculum
- **Phase II – Suquamish, PGST, ADAI**
  - Extend partnership to include Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
  - Replicate assessment and adaptation process for generalizability
  - Implement and evaluate curricula
- **Phase III – Suquamish, PGST, Makah, ADAI**
  - Implement and disseminate

# Healing of the Canoe: Background

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- Funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD)
- Developed through a tribal-academic partnership, based on tribal invitation to help address tribal youth substance abuse
- Used community-based and tribal-based participatory research approach
- Employed principles of cultural adaptation
- Blends Tribal traditions, cultural values, and Indigenous knowledge with evidence-based practices
- Results in decreased substance use, increased engagement in cultural activities, and increased future hope and optimism

## “What kinds of things are you most concerned about in your community?”

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- Youth substance abuse
- A lack or loss of cultural identity, meaning and belonging as a Tribal and community member among youth

## “What are the greatest resources in the community to deal with these issues?”

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- Tribal Elders
- Tribal Youth
- Suquamish Tribal traditions, values, beliefs, teachings, practices, and stories



**While substance use was the primary target, it needed to be addressed in a way that would encourage cultural “revitalization”, identity, and engagement by incorporating:**

- use of extended family
- traditional teachings
- culturally specific approaches
- cultural restoration (mentors, crafts, language)

**In addition, it also would be important to incorporate methods that :**

- promote Suquamish identity and self-efficacy
- build community connections
- promote culture, tribe, and extended family
- increase community support systems

# Identifying the EBP with the Community and Preliminary Adaptation



Photo Copyright Ron Peltier 2013

# THE GREAT CANOES

REVIVING A NORTHWEST COAST TRADITION



DAVID NEEL

Pacific Northwest  
American Indian / Alaska  
Native Cultural Resurgence  
through the Canoe  
Journey

# CANOE JOURNEY / LIFE'S JOURNEY

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"The 'journey' is an opportunity to teach prevention through our culture....It brings self-esteem and reminds us all where we come from."



Herman Williams Jr., Tribal Council Chairman of the Tulalip Tribes.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Tuesday, July 29, 2003

***A journey toward healing, by canoe***



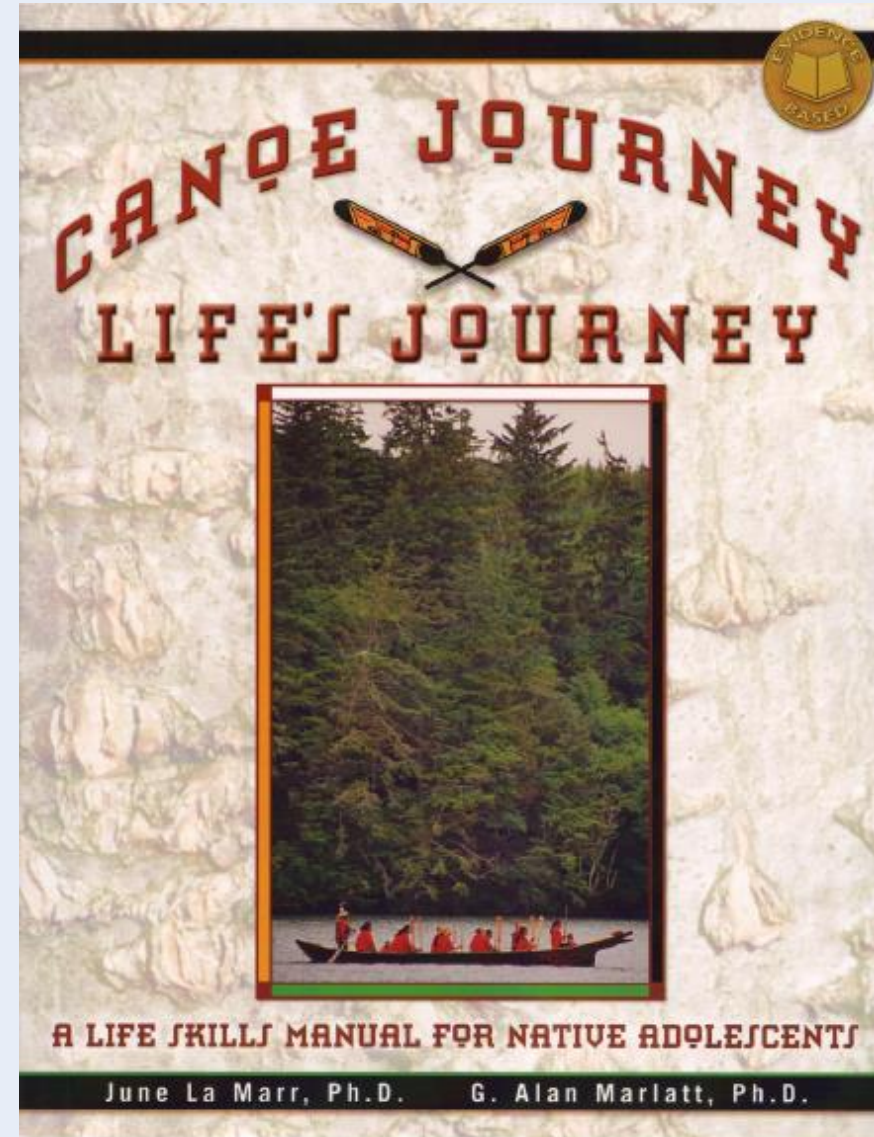
Manyhands by Roy Henry Vickers

**"I'm an alcoholic in recovery. I went to a medicine man to learn our ancient ways of sobriety, which connected me to the old ways of being spiritual, and that led me to the canoe which is a sacred part of who we are."**

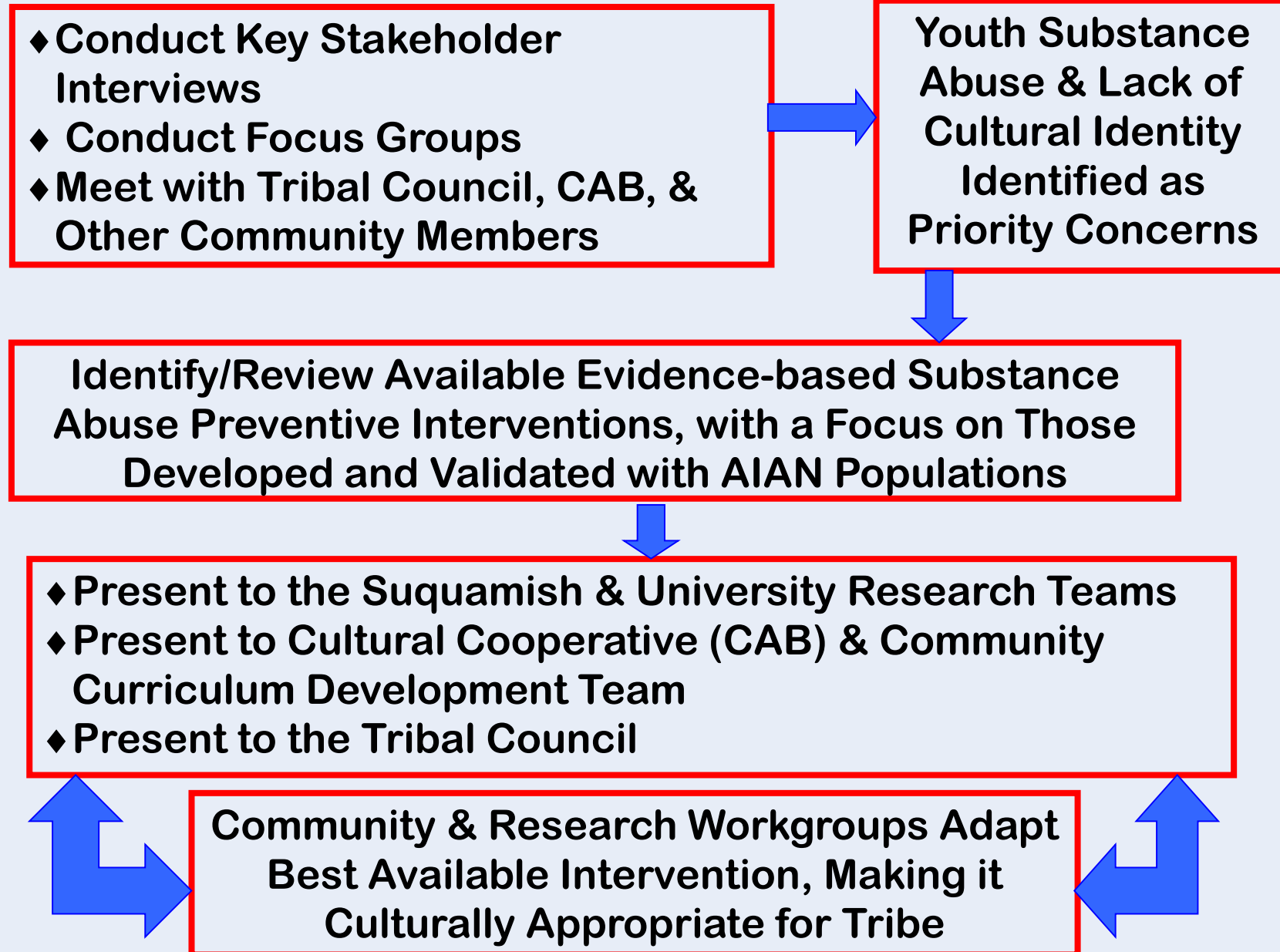


## Canoe Journey / Life's Journey

- A life skills curriculum based on the Canoe Journey
- Developed for an urban AIAN population
- To prevent the initiation of substance use and promote abstinence
- To reduce the risk of harm and the potential for developing an addiction
- To help Native youth identify and utilize healthy and appropriate social skills and lifestyle choices



# Developing the HOC Intervention: An Iterative Process



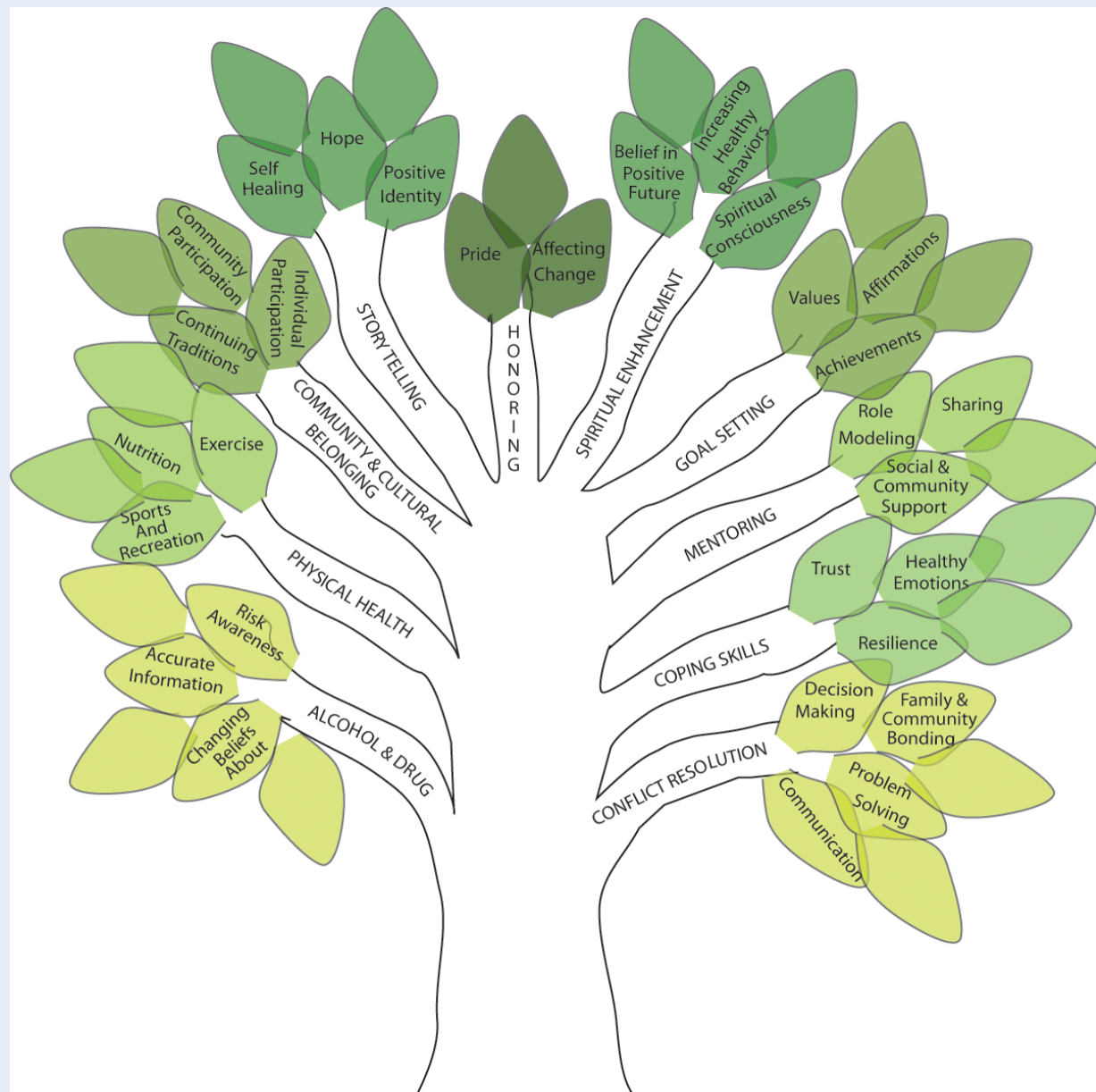
## holding up Our Youth



Healing of the Canoe:  
The Community Pulling Together

- An 11-session prevention program plus Honoring Ceremony incorporating evidence-based components with Indigenous knowledge, traditions, and values
- Two suicide preventions modules subsequently added
- Provides Native Youth the skills needed to navigate through life's journey without being pulled off course by alcohol or drugs, with tribal culture, traditions, and values as compass to guide them and anchor to ground them





**Blending Tribal traditions, cultural values, and Indigenous knowledge with evidence-based practices**

**The deeper the roots, the stronger the branches**

# Healing of the Canoe: Curriculum Chapters

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- Four Seasons & Canoe Journey Metaphor
- Who I Am – Beginning at the Center
- How Am I Perceived?
- Community Help & Support
- Moods & Coping with Emotions
- Staying Safe: Suicide Prevention
- How Can I Help? Suicide Intervention
- Who Will I Become? Goal Setting
- Overcoming Obstacles – Solving Problems
- Listening
- Effective Communication – Expressing Thoughts & Feelings
- Safe Journey without Alcohol & Drugs
- Strengthening Our Community
- Honoring Ceremony

# Healing of the Canoe Curriculum: Life Skills Included

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- Self awareness and self-definition
- Recognizing and standing up against stereotypes
- Getting help from one's community
- Mentoring others
- Coping with negative emotions
- Goal setting
- Overcoming obstacles and solving problems
- Listening, effective communication
- Understanding consequences of substance abuse
- Community leadership, serving the community



Holding Up Our Youth Curriculum

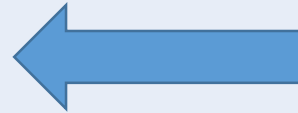
# SKILLS FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY

# Navigating Life the S'Klallam Way



The Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe  
&  
Alcohol & Drug Abuse Institute  
University of Washington

*Facilitator Manual*  
© 2011



# Holding Up Our Youth

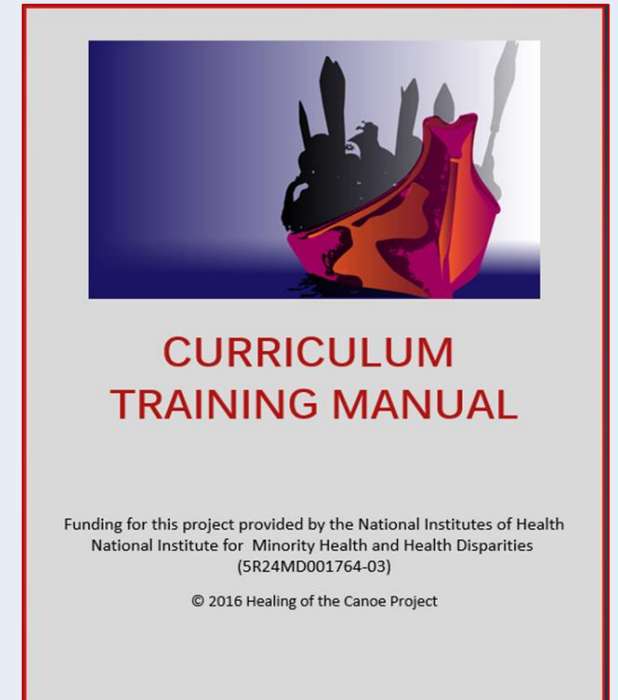
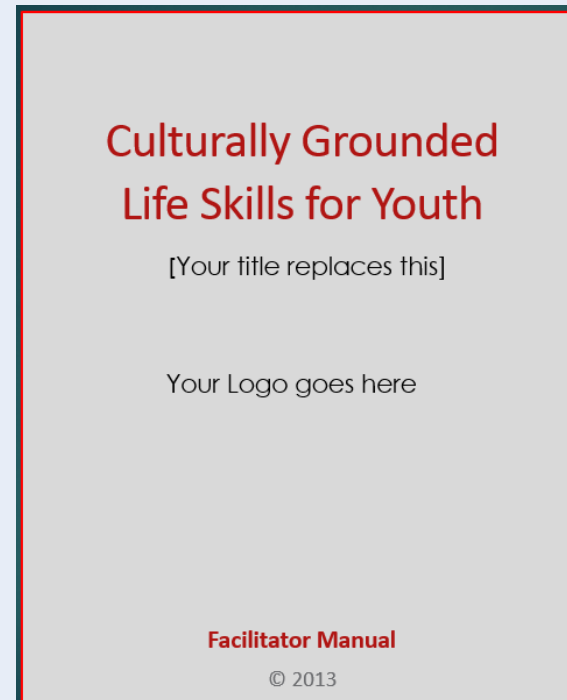


**Healing of the Canoe:  
Community Pulling Together**

# Healing of the Canoe Materials

- Generic curriculum template: “Culturally Grounded Life Skills for Youth”
- Adaptation , implementation, and training manual
- Participant handouts

Tribal Communities determine their own metaphor and integrate their own traditions, culture, values, language, and ceremonial activities into the generic curriculum



**Generic Curriculum Template and Training Manual for Dissemination and Community Adaptation**

# Generic Curriculum Template and Training Manual

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Copies of the Generic Curriculum Template and Training Manual are available at no charge from:

Healthy Native Youth Website

<https://www.healthynativeyouth.org/curricula/The-Healing-of-the-Canoe>

# The Curriculum is Highly Adaptable

## **Adaptable across venues**

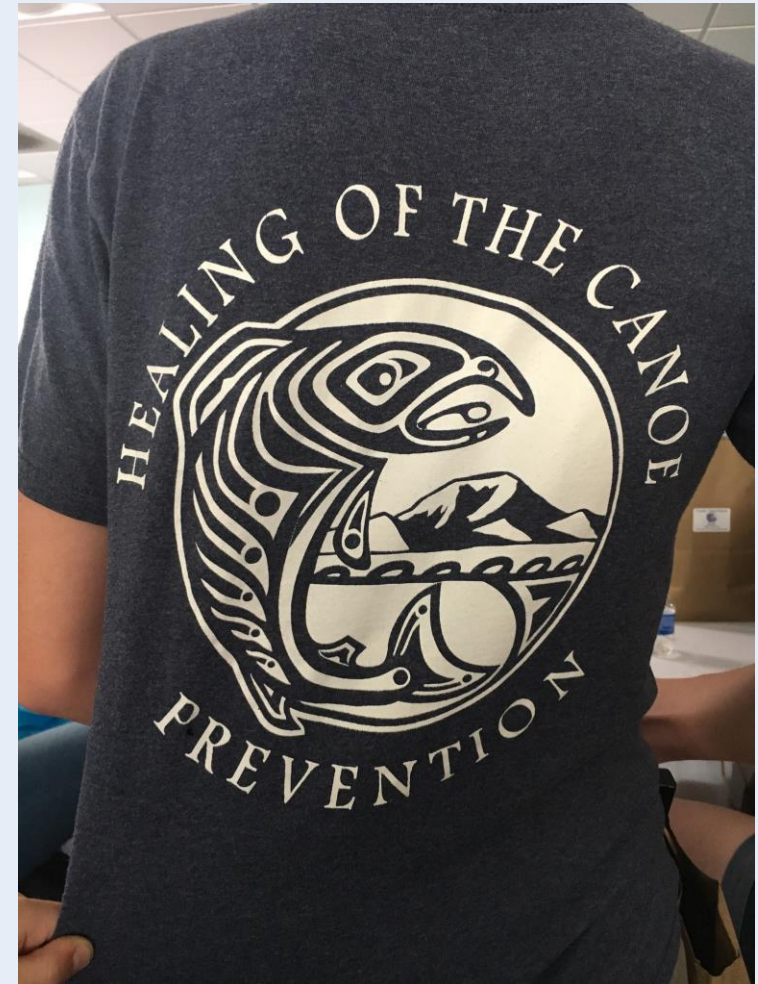
- Summer school
- After school/During school
- Summer Camp/Culture Camp
- Series of Intensive Retreats
- Wellness programs

## **Adaptable across age groups**

- Middle school
- High school
- Young adults

## **Adaptable across target groups**

- Prevention
- Treatment







# Healing of the Canoe: Curriculum Trainings

Save the Date!

## Healing of the Canoe Curriculum Training

May 24-25, 2016

Clearwater Casino Resort  
Suquamish, WA

**For more information:**

[info@healingofthecanoe.org](mailto:info@healingofthecanoe.org)



# Healing of the Canoe Training Options

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- Individual Tribe or Multiple-Tribe training workshops
- In-person, webinar, or phone Technical Assistance at individual, organizational, and/or tribal levels focused on adaptation and implementation
- Ongoing involvement in learning collaborative of shared experiences
- “Booster” sessions for tribal communities or organizations that have already received training
- Consultation for grant/funding opportunities to support implementation and sustainability

# Our Training and TA Helps Tribal Communities To:

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- Assess community needs, resources, and readiness
- Focus the curriculum on specific issues of concern, and address those using community-based and culturally grounded strengths and resources
- Select/develop a “journey” metaphor that fits culturally with the community
- Adapt the curriculum to the community’s specific cultural teachings, practices, traditions, values, and activities
- Engage community members to be active contributors in adapting and implementing the curriculum
- Implement the adapted curriculum with youth (or adults) in your community
- Evaluate the impact of the curriculum at individual, organizational, and community levels

# Our 2014 - 2018 Trainings Have Been Successful: 350 attendees from 46 Tribes and 14 Tribal Organizations!



# Perceptions of HOC Curriculum

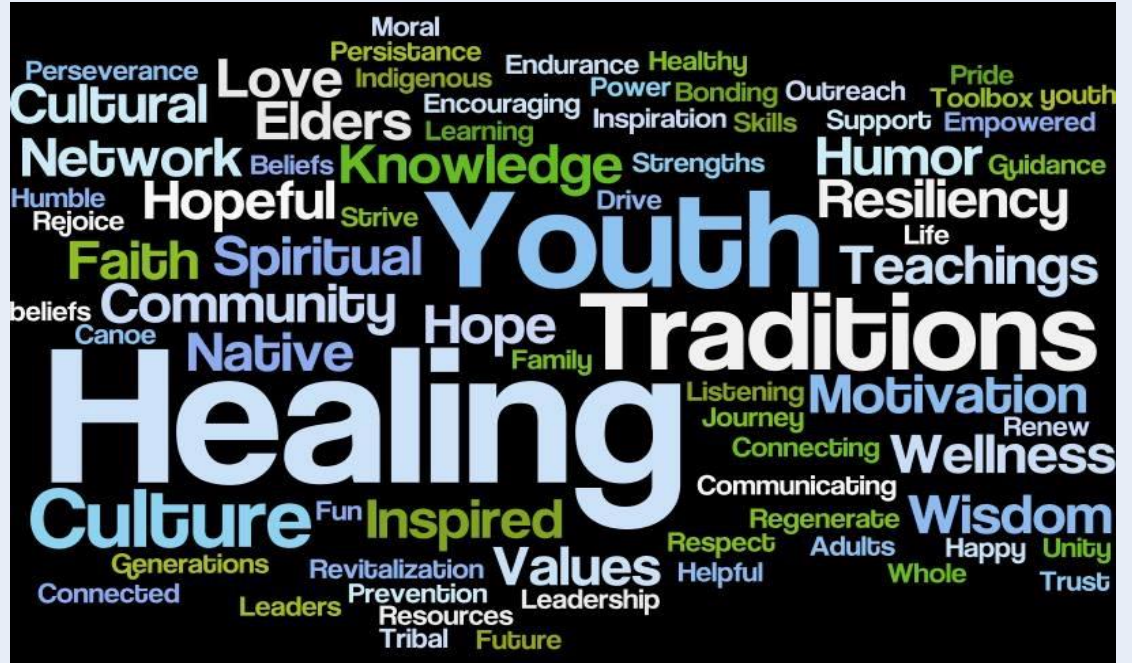
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“Thanks!! And thanks for an amazing curriculum. I love it. So creative, relevant, and life-saving.

I visited a client in juvy a couple days ago and told her about it, and she said (I’m not making this up) ‘finally, someone is doing something to help us.’

I’m looking forward to the training.”

Laura



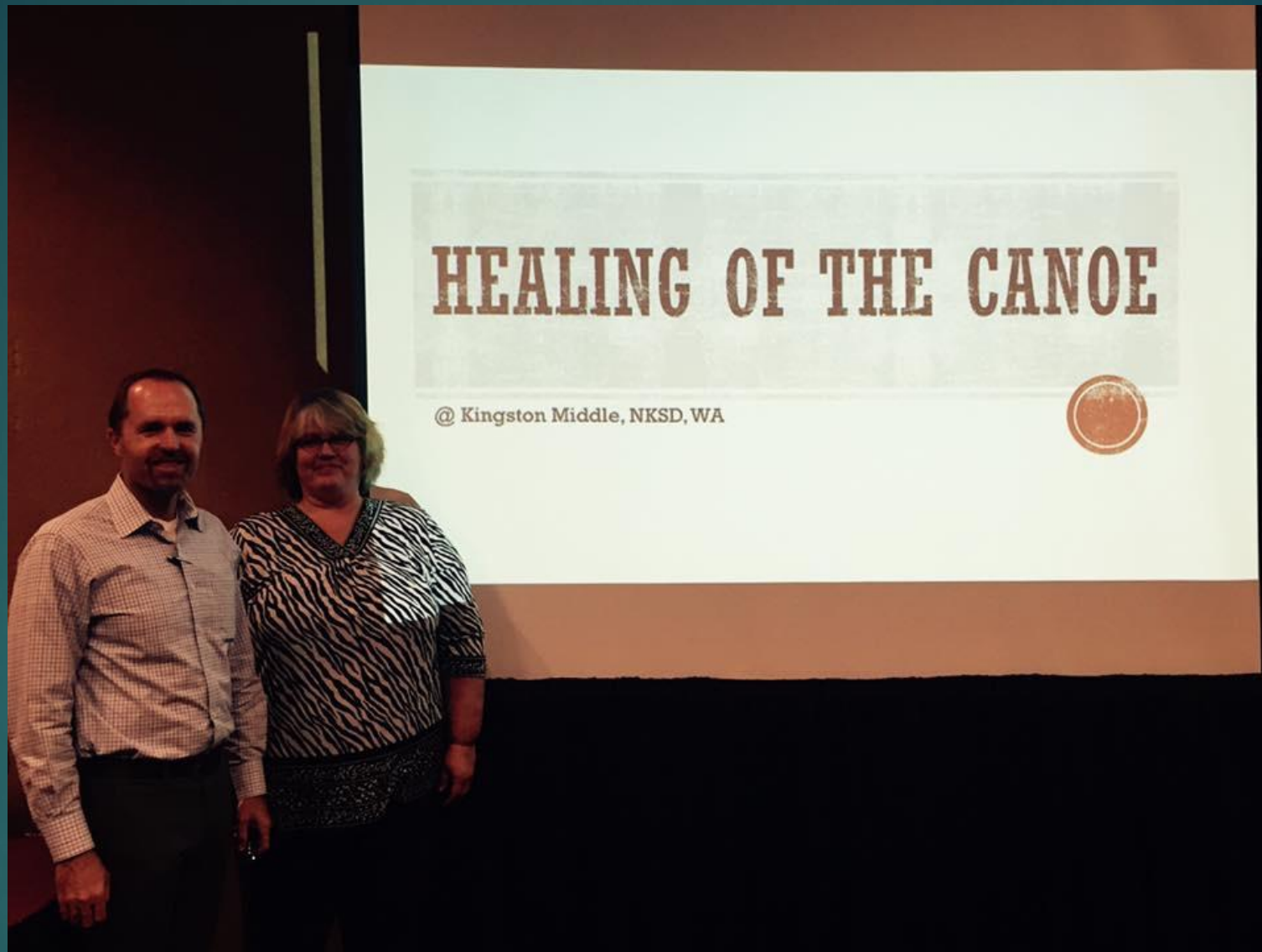
# HOC in the Northwest ATTC



On October 18-19, 2017, the Northwest ATTC held its inaugural event, a 1.5 day training on the Healing of the Canoe curriculum.

The training has been followed by a series of monthly technical assistance conference calls.





From Training to Community  
Implementation



In the end.....

*" We told them what we needed them to do  
and then they did it!"*

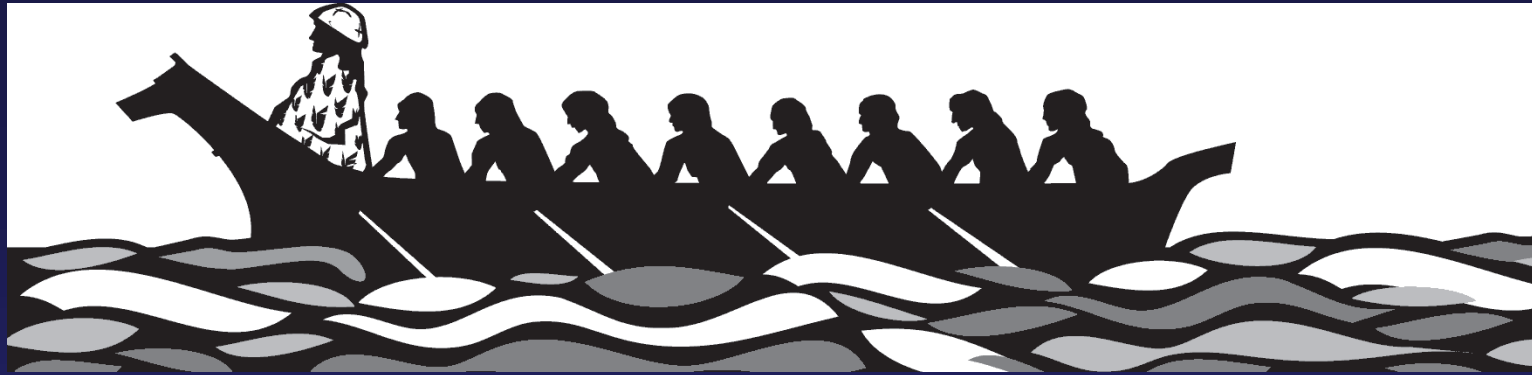
Tribal Elder





**HOC team after canoe trip at Port Gamble S'Klallam (2010), including the Chair and Administrator of the UW Human Subjects IRB Committee overseeing the project**





## The Suquamish Tribe

- The Suquamish Tribe
- Suquamish Cultural Cooperative
- Suquamish Tribal Council
- Suquamish Elders
- Suquamish Education
- Suquamish Community
- Robin Sigo
- Nigel Lawrence
- Albie Lawrence
- Kate Ahvakana
- Lenora Bagley
- Lisa Jackson
- Gidget Lincoln
- Laura Sachs
- Steve Gallion
- Truth Griffeth



- Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
- Port Gamble Tribal Council
- Chi-e-chee Community Advisory Board
- Port Gamble Elders
- Laura Price
- Joe Price
- Kelly Baze
- Abby Purser

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

**ADAI** Alcohol &  
Drug Abuse  
Institute

- **Dennis Donovan**
- **Lisa Rey Thomas**
- **Lisette Austin**
- **Heather Lonczak**
- **Merrilee Gavigan**
- **Belinda Sachs**
- **G. Alan Marlatt**
- **Bonnie Duran**
- **UW Human Subjects Division**
- **UW Office of Sponsored Programs**

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