

Pro-Active Culturally Relevant Response to Gambling Addiction

As Mnjikaning embarked on this exciting and economically viable journey in the gaming world, we realized that there were many positive and negative aspects associated with legalized gambling. As an economical engine towards self sufficiency for Ontario Aboriginal People and our location in the heart of Ontario's vacation land, a Casino venture seemed to be the appropriate and obvious direction to take.

However, we also realized that one of the problems associated with gaming is Gambling Addiction. Mnjikaning is no stranger to addiction having dealt with alcoholism for many years. It is because of this history of addiction that Mnjikaning is particularly concerned about understanding the nature of addiction in general and discovering effective ways to deal with the problem.

Our Chief Lorraine McRae was very concerned about the development of a Permanent Full-time Casino – open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Her concern mainly was to be responsible owner and operator and to provide the prevention, awareness and treatment assistance necessary for people who suffer the negative affects of problem, compulsive and or pathological gambling.

BIIDAABAN INTRO

1993 TO 1995.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT CENTRES ISSUES—CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.

1995.

Along with our new Gambling Addiction Program we also began to look at another monster trying to rear its ugly head in our community—Child Sexual Abuse. Under the direction of Dr. Ed Connors; a psychologist of Mohawk and Irish ancestry, we looked at many native healing models and decided that the Hollow Water Model (Hollow Water Manitoba) was the most suitable approach for our community. We named our model Biidaaban, which is an Ojibway meaning for a new beginning or a new day. We named ourselves Biidaaban Circle.

The Biidaaban Healing Model is a holistic healing approach to wellness based on ACCOUTABILITY, RESTITUTION, and RECONCILIATION, for the purpose of restoring BALANCE in the lives of people that have been affected. The Biidaaban Healing Model is also an alternative means of native justice we offer to the Provincial, and Federal Justice System. Biidaaban is a VICTIM DRIVEN process that promotes HEALING rather than PUNISHMENT. The Biidaaban Circle emphasizes process as well as content. It is through the process that the content is taught. The process is achieved by means of the TALKING CIRCLE.

BIIDAABAN/THE MNJIKANING COMMUNITY HEALING MODEL

HISTORY OF BIIDAABAN

- Sexual abuse disclosures in treatment centres
- 1993** Human Services discussions regarding sexual abuse in community.
- 1994** Consultation with Dr. Connors.
- Jan. 95/96** Researched various community sexual abuse / healing models.
- Training and development of a model to meet our communities needs began.
- Extensive training in community healing
- June 1996** B.C.R. for implementation.
- Community Education
- Working with Families
- Outside agency education
- 1997** Facilitated first Community Gathering
- 1998** Federal support from Aboriginal Corrections
- Expansion of program
- 1999** Facilitated first sentencing circle in community
- 2000** Facilitated sentencing circle in court room

BIIDAABAN/THE MNJIKANING COMMUNITY HEALING MODEL

BIIDAABAN PHILOSOPHY

Based on First Nations knowledge of healing

- Restoring balance in the lives of those in the community affected by abuse
- Accountability
- Restitution
- Reconciliation

Healing Ourselves First.

Assist anyone who requests help.

Safety and protection of community is a priority

Label behaviour, not the person

BIIDAABAN SERVICES

Support to all family members

Individual, Family and Couple Counselling

Group Counselling and Traditional Healing

- Men's Circles
- Women's Circles
- Community Healing Circles
- Structured Relapse Prevention
- Anger Management
- Women's Survivors Group
- Youth/Family Conferencing

Community Education and Awareness

- Sexual Abuse Awareness
- Family Violence Awareness
- Addictions: Gambling, Alcohol and Drugs
- Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

Prevention and Safety Programs in the School

Assistance and support through the court process

Visiting Community Members who are Incarcerated

Facilitating Community Healing Gatherings and Sentencing Circles

Ongoing training for members

Educating and Liaison with Outside Agencies

- Crown Attorney's / Judges / Lawyers
- Police
- Probation and Parole
- Sexual Assault Centres
- National Parole Board
- Aboriginal Justice Learning Network
- Psychologist/Therapists
- Treatment Centres

**COMPARISONS BETWEEN JUSTICE SYSTEM AND
HEALING MODEL**

<i>JUSTICE SYSTEM</i>	<i>HEALING MODEL</i>
Serious/Less Serious Offences	All are serious offences
Innocent until proven guilty	Accepts responsibility
Promotes silence	Promotes breaking cycle of abuse
Process Lengthy	Process Lengthy
Community is not safer	Promotes a safer community
Courtroom not safe for disclosure	Circle safe for disclosure
Minimal or no treatment provided	Treatment offered for everyone
No community involvement	Total opportunity for community involvement

BIIDAABAN/THE MNJIKANING COMMUNITY HEALING MODEL

COMMUNITY GATHERING PROCESS

- 1 Ceremonial Opening
- 2 Declaration of Purpose and Introductions
- 3 Explanation of wrongful behaviour
- 4 Person who has wronged accepts responsibility
- 5 Participants of the Gathering speak
- 6 Solutions / Treatment plan are drafted by participants
- 7 Person who has wronged publicly apologizes and accepts treatment plan
- 8 Six month review date is set
- 9 Ceremonial Closure
- 10 Debriefing

***TREATMENT PLAN / HEALING CONTRACT
WILL BE IMPLEMENTED***

THE TALKING CIRCLE MODEL:

- 1.) **MODEL:** can become the basis to deal with drugs, alcohol, and gambling addiction, sexual abuse, and all of the many health problems faced by our communities, including the fight against diabetes.
- 2.) **PRIDE/SELF RESPECT:** until we can engender pride and self-respect in people they will not take care of themselves and will continue to abuse their Spirit, Mind, Emotion, and Body. In the talking circle, we learn to look at ourselves and to relearn how to be our own teacher, counsellor, physician, and elder. We learn to recognize that we are responsible for our own healing and require only encouragement in an accepting atmosphere for this to happened.
- 3.) **HOLISTIC HEALING:** is used to emphasizes SPIRITUAL MENTAL EMOTIONAL and PHYSICAL healing, together rather than compartmentalizing people into separate aspects of healing.
- 4.) **BALANCE:** by way of a holistic approach we assist in bringing balance back into the lives of the individual, the family, and the community.
- 5.) **HONOUR OUR DIFFERENCES:** through this model, we learn to listen to each other, to respect our differences, and to come together on common ground when we have a difference of opinion. More importantly, we learn that it is okay to have a different way of seeing things but still have value in the group.
- 6.) **SENSE OF BELONGING:** the circle provides a sense of belonging and it is this sense of belonging that gives us confidence to go out into the greater community and function in a healthier way.

THE TALKING CIRCLE MODEL CONTINUED:

- 7.) **FOUR GIFTS:** the talking circle model is based on the four gifts given to all of us by the Creator:

SHARING, HONESTY, KINDNESS, and STRENGTH.

- 8.) **SEVEN TEACHINGS:** the Talking Circle nurtures the expression of these gifts through the seven teachings:

**RESPECT, BRAVERY, HONESTY, HUMILITY,
TRUTH, WISDOM, and LOVE.**

It is through the ongoing exposure to these teachings that we can overcome the fears that promotes Jealousy, Resentment, Inferiority, and Negative Attitudes that work to tear our people and our communities apart resulting in physical problems, addictions, and abuse.

THE TALKING CIRCLE is a familiar concept to Native people and congruent with the Native way. It is from this circle that other programs can spring. The Circle provides a framework for people to heal at their own rate in their own way.

The Seven Teachings of our Ancestors

⇒ **Wisdom** – Wisdom gained through life experiences...mistakes and all. True wisdom is using your skills and knowledge to help people learn from their mistakes or misfortunes. Wisdom can come from the elders and youth as well.

⇒ **Love** – Love means loving your wife or husband and family members unconditionally. Love also means learning to love yourself.

⇒ **Respect** – It is about accepting everyone as they are and not being judgemental. This may involve education, sports, leadership, race, culture or religion. Respect is about listening openly to other people's opinions, being aware of their feelings, and acknowledging their accomplishments. We all have a choice in what we want to believe or follow. Our elders tell us to respect everyone!

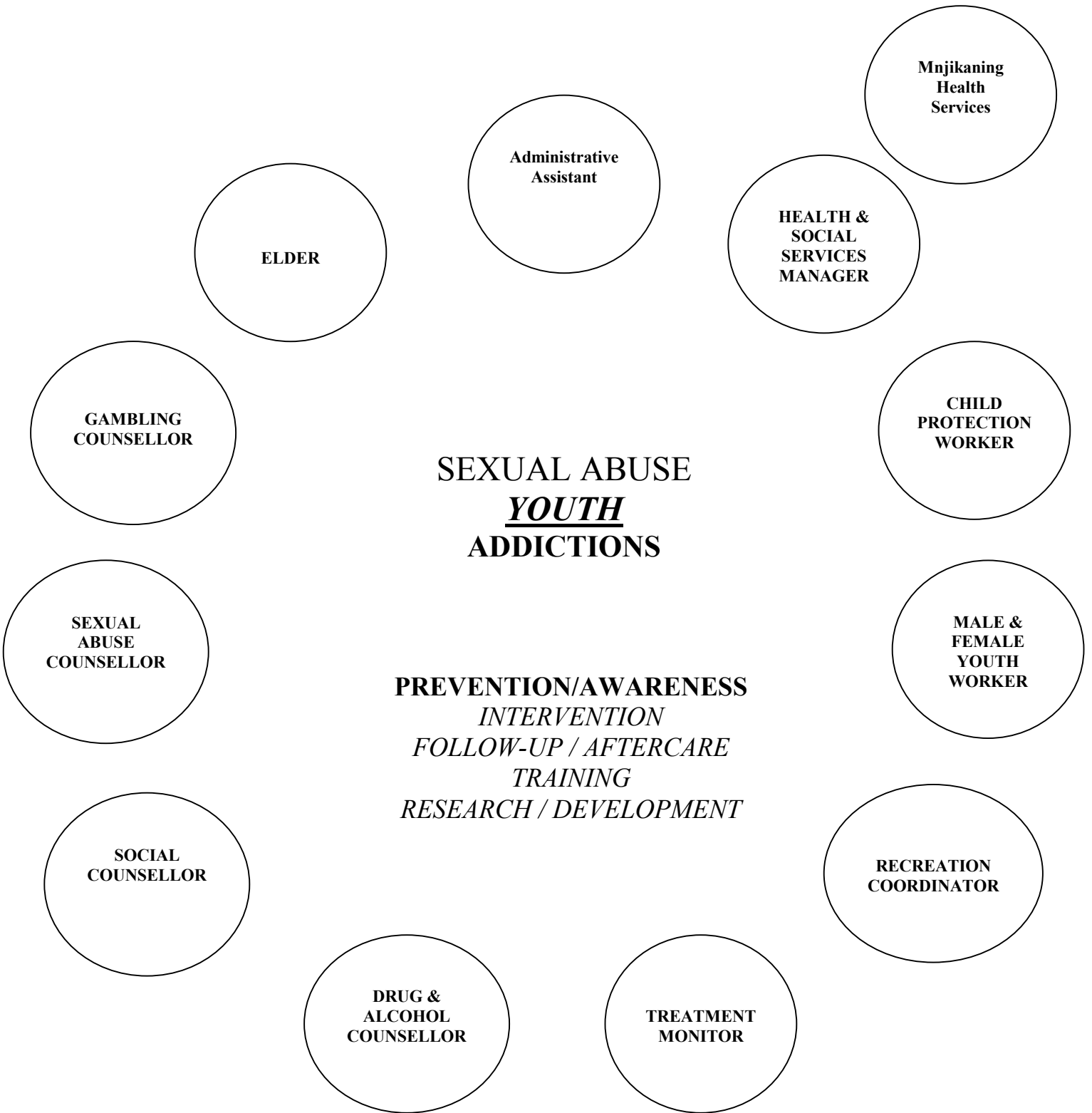
⇒ **Bravery** – One of life's many challenges is getting the courage to do things that are difficult such as admitting you are wrong, or that you need help and support. It is about your greatest enemy which is yourself. That enemy may come in the form of denial, non-acceptance of disbelief.

⇒ **Honesty** – Truth or honesty is being up front in everything that you say and do with no hidden agenda or ulterior motive.

⇒ **Humility** – Real honest to goodness humility is about being humble. Teaching and showing children humbleness is one of the greatest lessons we can give our children.

⇒ **Knowledge** – Acquiring skills, experience and knowledge is about personal success; it is quite another to use those qualities to help others succeed.

GGA WIIDOOKAADMIN SOCIAL SERVICES



GAMBLING ADDICTION PROGRAM

MANDATE:

For the last four and a half years, we have been working on the mandate from Chief and Council to develop a Gambling Addictions Program as a response to the social impact of the Casino development within our community. During this time, we have looked at different ways that other states and provinces have addressed this problem. We are currently participating in training to acquire specialised knowledge in this area. At the same time, we have been working with our local Mnjikaning Addictions Steering Committee to develop a program specific to and relevant for Native People. To this end we developed a Mission Statement and a Native definition of Addiction.

THE GAMBLING ADDICTIONS PROGRAM

MISSION STATEMENT

Developed by

Mnjikaning Addiction Steering Committee

We recognize that a spectrum of problems exist beneath the addictive behaviour of our community manifested through alcohol, drugs and gambling. These problems surface at every stage of life. We are dedicated to discovering new and different approaches to addressing these problems, approaches that are community-based, culturally relevant, respecting many paths, but encompassing the spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental well-being of the community. We also recognize that this is an emerging process responsive to the needs of the community and sensitive to reaching out to our neighbors beyond our borders.

THE GAMBLING ADDICTIONS PROGRAM

ADDICTION : NATIVE DEFINITION

Developed by

MNJIKANING ADDICTION STEERING COMMITTEE:

Native addiction is a progressive imbalance of body, mind and spirit as a result of cultural generational oppression and loss, manifested by low self-worth, anxiety, and pain. To escape these black feelings, the person who is addicted seeks an instant high only to experience an emotional low which creates loneliness, guilt, shame, and spiritual bankruptcy.

FROM A GAMBLING ADDICTION PROGRAM TO THE
COMMUNITY HEALING CIRCLE

The Mission Statement and the Native Definition of Addiction provided the basis for the development of the Gambling Addictions Program. As this program has taken shape, we have discovered that the model for this program is the model being used in the Sexual Abuse Program, the “TALKING CIRCLE”. It is totally in line with our mandate and it only makes sense that the two programs are merely subsets of the total Circle Model. In order to further develop the Gambling Addictions Program, we need to develop this Circle Model and incorporate it into the total response to healing. We feel strongly that this is the correct path and should be the model pursued.



**HEALTH &
SOCIAL
SERVICES
MANAGER**