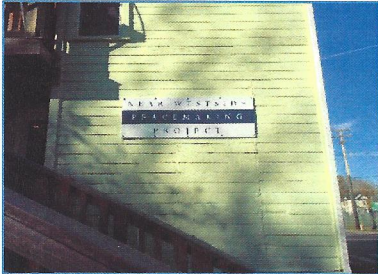
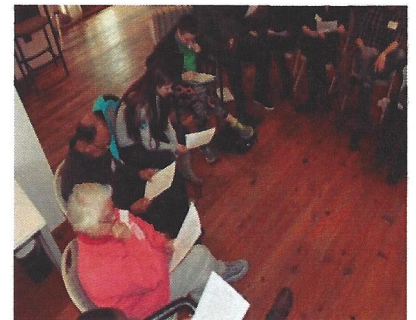


NEAR WESTSIDE
PEACEMAKING
PROJECT



How Can Peacemaking Help the Community? The Near Westside Peacemaking Project provides free, community-based conflict resolution (peacemaking) in a high crime neighborhood in Syracuse, New York. The Peacemaking Center is located at 601 Tully Street and opened its doors in March 2015. The Project accepts cases from the courts, police, probation, neighborhood schools and community members.

What is Peacemaking? Peacemaking is a traditional Native American approach to justice. It brings together people who are in conflict, along with family and friends, to resolve problems in a peacemaking circle. All participants are treated equally and are allowed to speak. The purpose is to reach a consensus decision.



Who are the Peacemakers? The Peacemakers are community volunteers who have completed an extensive training program. Being a Peacemaker requires commitment to completing the training program, participating in peacemaking circles, and believing in a community's ability to resolve conflict. The Project has trained twenty-nine community members from all walks of life as Peacemakers.



Community Benefits Projects: The Project also coordinates place-based community projects in collaboration with residents and other service agencies. Past projects include holding community dialogues around race, religion and violence, bringing firefighters and a fire truck to the neighborhood for kids to explore and learn about fire safety, and hosting free family movie nights in a neglected outdoor grassy area.

Take Back the Streets: The Project participates in a neighborhood anti-violence, crime-prevention initiative in the Near Westside called [Take Back the Streets](#). The initiative is leading 50 community-based projects in 2016 to address violence, blight, and social disorder.

Near Westside Peacemaking Project - Center for Count Innovation
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Two Different Views

Conventional Justice

Behavior is a violation of the rules and the state/school.

Violations create guilt.

Justice requires the state/school to determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment).

Restorative Justice

Behavior is a violation of the people and relationships.

Violations create obligations.

Justice involves victims, offenders, and community members in an effort to put things right.

The individual is punished and gets what he/she deserves.

END GOAL



The victim's needs are identified and the offender is responsible for repairing the harm.

The questions we ask matter.

What rules have been broken?

Who did it?

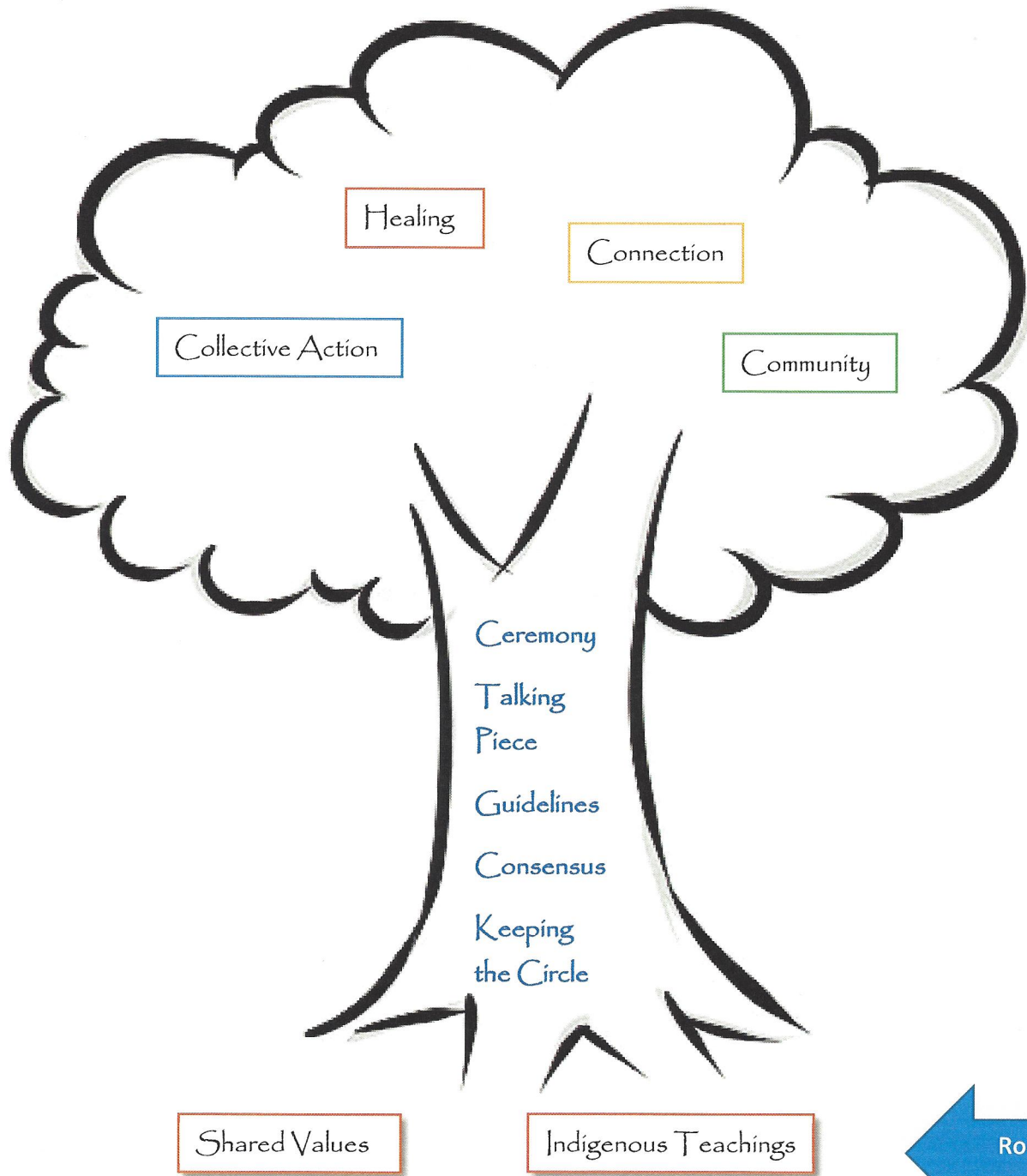
What do they deserve?

Who has been hurt?

What are their needs?

Whose obligation is it to repair the harm?

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Inspired by a training with Kay Pranis (2016)

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Y and J went from being friends to outright enemies in a matter of weeks...

Their arguments built until they were pulling hair, trailing each other home, hitting and spitting on the playground at their school. Other kids egged them on, instigating the fights and telling them that if they didn't fight, they weren't standing up for themselves. After a particularly bad fight, both girls were asked not to return to school and the police were contacted.

This is where the Near Westside Peacemaking Center stepped in. We brought together the two girls and their adults into a peacemaking circle and explained that there was a better way. We invited three community member peacemakers, people who know what it's like to grow-up in a rough neighborhood where not standing up for yourself is seen as weak.

And that's what Y and J needed. They needed adults who took them seriously. They needed community members who said, "We can help." They needed the grown-ups around them to say, "We hear you." And so they apologized. And their adults cried and hugged. And then the girls smiled and hugged. They agreed to stop the fighting. Y and J were allowed back to school. The police investigation would go no further.



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