



Presented by Abraham Bearpaw

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About Abraham Bearpaw

- Member of the Flintrock Ceremonial Ground in Rocky Mountain
- In Recovery for 13 years
- Created Walking In Balance for my own recovery
- Author
- Motivational Speaker



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Welcome

Overview - Walking In Balance is a culturally centered self-improvement and prevention program. The curriculum blends traditional wellness practices with contemporary psychological knowledge and practical applications. The Walking In Balance curriculum is trauma-informed and adaptable to any program's unique culture and needs.

Objective - Walking In Balance seeks to educate and empower participants to improve their situations through simple lifestyle changes. The program is designed to reduce risk factors for chronic physical and mental health conditions as well as increase resiliency.

The curriculum can be used for substance misuse, gambling addiction, suicide, and domestic violence prevention, public health, burnout prevention (as well as many other topics and populations)

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Native Culture Promotes Wellness and Balance

Native Traditional teachings come in part from:

- Ceremony
- Spirituality
- Gathering and making medicine
- Stickball and other Native games

These aspects of Native life provide a program for wellness.

- Learning/speaking Language
- Art-pottery, basket making etc.
- Storytelling
- Hunting & Gathering
- Relationships

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Walking In Balance Components promote connection and inner growth.

Wellness **Vʌ ZQʌʒET Tohi nodvhnadegvi**

We aspire to be spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially well.

Mindfulness **QʌQʌRʌCʌ Udanvthotsvhi**

We aspire to be present in this moment without judging ourselves or others.

Gratitude **DʒʒʌQʌJ Alihelisi**

We aspire to live in gratitude and practice it daily.

Self-Compassion **DGLVʒʌ Awadadolitsati**

We aspire to be compassionate to ourselves at all times. We aspire to forgive, accept and love ourselves unconditionally.

Self-care **ʌʌʌ-DL54-DVJ Owasa-adagasesdodi**

We aspire to practice self-care regularly despite our busy schedules.

Recovery **VʌQʌQʌ Dotsadanvtsiha**

We aspire to recover and improve our health, wellness and connection.

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Components Continued

Respect **JʌLhʌQʌJ Didadanilvsdi**

We aspire to always show respect to ourselves, others and the environment.

Communication **JʌQʌVʌJ Didadvgododi**

We aspire to communicate effectively and practice active listening.

Service **TʌQʌJ Idadvnedi**

We aspire to be of service to others whenever possible and help each other to Walk In Balance.

Action **DʒʒʌhʌQʌJ Alitelvnidasdi**

We aspire to accomplish our goals through action and personal responsibility.

Perseverance **JʌRʌQʌJ hʌRʌQʌ Didayahisdi nigesvna**

We aspire to persevere despite any challenge that comes our way.

Balance **TʌQʌQʌ Igatihaguu**

We aspire to Walk In Balance with our spirit and environment.

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Wellness – Cultural teaching

Wellness

V8 Z04SET Tohi nodvhnadegvi

We aspire to be spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially well

- Traditionally, there was an emphasis placed on wellness as that was the lifelong ambition of Native people. Not wealth or notoriety or power. It was the ability to be well, feel well, and live in balance that was the intention and purpose of our culture. However, it is not any one area of wellness that produces the desired outcome but the balance of our physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social wellness.

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Wellness – supporting psychological knowledge

Society has imbalanced priorities: valuing power/greed over health, but our true **wealth** is our **health** and we have lost sight of that

Those of us who are aware of this **blame society** for all the ways in which most people don't have access to health, rightfully so, AND at the same time, **we are society**, so if we want it to change, we have to change by taking our wellness seriously and the doing the best we can with the resources we have

The consequence of not focusing and prioritizing health and wellness is **having our lives and society taken over by illness and addiction**

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Wellness – Practical application

What is one thing you would like to change in your life to improve your wellness?

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Gratitude - Cultural teaching

Gratitude

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We aspire to live in gratitude and practice it daily.

- For Native people, gratitude lies at the center of our culture. We are taught that gratitude is a spiritual practice that we should focus on daily despite any adversity we are facing. From the time that we awake to our last thoughts before sleep, we are taught to appreciate all that we are blessed with. This practice has enabled us to remain positive and productive in the face of extreme hardship.

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Gratitude - supporting psychological knowledge

The field of neuroscience confirms that **gratitude literally rewires the brain to be more positive and improves overall life satisfaction**

We have found that gratitude helps us

- Reduce stress, depression, and anxiety
- Improve physical, mental, and spiritual health
- Improve sleep
- Improve interpersonal relationships
- Lower the risk of heart disease
- Lower the risk of substance use disorders and aid in recovery and maintaining sobriety

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Gratitude - Practical application

What is one thing you are grateful for about yourself?

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Self-compassion - Cultural teaching

Self-Compassion

DGLVPCJ Awadadolitsati

We aspire to be compassionate to ourselves at all times. We aspire to forgive, accept, and love ourselves unconditionally.

- Traditional teachings about practicing self-compassion stress the importance of treating ourselves well. This is a skill that can be learned; however, it must also be practiced in order to produce any measurable benefit. Even though we want to be nice to ourselves and say nice things to ourselves, somewhere along the way we began to be overly critical, judgmental, and less patient with ourselves.

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Self-compassion - supporting psychological knowledge

Being a human is a very difficult experience, and instead of seeing our full context and everything we are up against, we have a **tendency to shame ourselves for not being good enough** or not having enough willpower, etc.

Having a strong **inner critic** that produces frequent shame is a **root cause of many mental health issues** and can lead to self-hatred – it is like having a narcissistic abuser in your head. Shame and self-criticism will never help you lead a balanced life, but we have found that self-compassion does help with wellness.

According to Kristin Neff's extensive research on this subject (as discussed in her book *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself*), Self-compassion has a significant positive association with:

- o Happiness/Positive mood
- o Optimism
- o Wisdom
- o Personal initiative
- o Curiosity and exploration
- o Agreeableness
- o Conscientiousness
- o Extroversion

Self-compassion also prevents occupational stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary traumatization for mental health workers and other direct-care providers.

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Self-compassion - Practical application

What is one thing that makes you proud of yourself?

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How to stay in touch with us

Websites
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(links to the participant workbook and facilitator guide can be found on wibwellness.com)

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***Full WIB participant and facilitator courses available online**
