

Training Goals

The gatherings will focus on the following: "1) Heal the healers by identifying barriers - a journey of self-discovery and healing. 2) Share 'In the Spirit of the Family'- the Alaskan story 3) Give children roots and wings - tools for parents, teachers and other adults. 4) Adult roots and wings - rediscover the Alaskan traditional 'Way of Knowing' to build harmonious relationships with each other and nature. 5) wellness."

Participants will understand Returning to Harmony as a path to community wellness. They will learn to share their own stories and be able to help others understand their personal stories as a step in the journey to wellness. They will understand where things are in rural Alaska today in the context of the past, and be able to identify next steps on the path to healing and wellness. Participants will increase their skills as wellness providers.

Who is trained?

In the first year the gatherings included 26 Alaskans who are currently working as counselors, family workers, behavioral health aides and in similar roles in their own communities. Fourteen are experienced Family Systems trainers and 12 are Rural Human Services Program graduates, new to Family Systems.

Who are the trainers?

The trainers are Alaska Native Master Family Systems Trainers, and former instructors in the Rural Human Services Program who have traveled and worked extensively in rural Alaska all the while listening and learning from Elders. They see this project as a way to pass on that knowledge and share it with a new generation.

Where does training take place?

The initial 3.5 day gathering took place in Anchorage. On-going support is provided telephonically.

How long is the training?

The project has funding for one year. Project staff are helping trainees seek funding to continue the project, with more face to face gatherings and on-going support including community visits.

What does the training include?

The initial 3.5 day gathering used an updated version of Native Family Systems methodology. It included looking at Native Family Systems concepts, the characteristics of a healthy family, sharing personal stories, and exploring the dynamics and patterns that shaped participants lives. It addressed the underlying factors that impact collective cultural, personal, family and community health, and included sharing cultural knowledge from Elders, talking circles and a healing ceremony.

What follow-up is available after the training?

Weekly telephonic support.

What does the training cost?

Currently, agencies or communities can contract the Master Trainers program staff at a cost of \$500/day/trainer, plus transportation, lodging and food.

Has the program been evaluated?

Evaluation measures are built into the program in the form of an evaluation at the end of the initial gathering, and surveys to be conducted three months following.

Future Plans

Current staff are seeking funds to continue the program and train additional people.

Program Funding Source

The program is supported for one year by grants to RurAL CAP from the Wells Fargo Bank's Rural Investment for Sustainable Economies (RISE) fund and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

Trainer Qualifications

The Master Trainers are Family Systems trained Alaska Natives with many years of experience providing counseling, training and education programs in rural Alaska, and of listening to and learning from Elders across the state. The Project Technical Advisor has an MSW and one of the trainers has an M.A. in Rural Development.