

# FRIENDSHIP HOUSE HEALING MODEL

## *a Community Defined Evidence Practice*

*"The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that this center is really everywhere, it within each of us."*  
 - Black Elk, Oglala Sioux, 1863-1950 -

The Friendship House Healing Model & Community Defined Evidence Practice (CDEP) was developed over 40 years ago and is the foundation of the organization and all Friendship House programs. All aspects of the model are guided by principles found in American Indian culture, history, tradition, and spirituality.

In the American Indian traditional ceremonial approach to Healing and Wellness, the Medicine Wheel is used and shows the connection between the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual realms that each individual must address in his, her, or their quest to establish and preserve balance in life.

Any place where we can gather for ceremony can be a sacred place for us. Within the Four Directions, the Creator has given us places to help us:

- > The Northern Path (Spiritual) focuses on values of charity, honor, generosity, and gratitude
- > The Eastern Path (Mental) focuses on values of faith, humility, courage, and honesty
- > The Southern Path (Emotional) focuses on values of hope, patience, wisdom, and sacrifice
- > The Western Path (Physical) focuses on values of love, fortitude, compassion, and respect

A ceremony can be a celebration of life, by bringing together people, beliefs, and sacred objects, in prayer and songs. It can be a purification, cleansing, and healing ritual, a way of detoxifying emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually. A ceremony can be a means to show our respect for creation and honor for those who came before us. Ancestral ceremonial grounds are sacred and holy because the spirits can still be there. For Friendship House healing ceremonies are integral to all program efforts.



## Key Indicators of Success for Residents of the Friendship House Substance Abuse Treatment Program

Residential clients make a life-changing investment in their own recovery and wellness when they enter the Friendship House Substance Abuse Treatment Program. **What is the residential client's personal Return on Investment (ROI) during and following their participation in the Friendship House Substance Abuse Treatment Program?**

### SAFETY & STABILITY

**Wellness Environment:** Residential clients with at least 7 days stay at Friendship House notice stability in their physical health, and from there, improvements continue and include the mental, emotional, and spiritual parts of their recovery. In FY 2022/23, 100% of Residents with 3+ days of stay began to experience stability in their nutrition and sleep schedules and were screened and referred to collaborative partners for medical, dental, behavioral, and cultural/spiritual needs. 100% of Residents with 7+ days of stay participated in weekly case management meetings and in developing their personal treatment plan.

### EDUCATION

**Learning Environment:** Significant attitudes change in a positive direction and knowledge gains were noted for residential clients across 7 indicators by the end of three-months. The 7 indicators include: Tobacco use, binge drinking of alcoholic beverages, marijuana or hashish use, sharing needles/syringes when using drugs, non-prescription opioid drugs use, taking prescription opioid drugs without a doctor's order, and having sex while high on drugs or under the influence of alcohol (FH Medicine Shield Findings, 2023, n=180).

### CULTURAL PATH

**Native Foundation:** Friendship House integrates American Indian healing practices with evidence-based methods to address the complex needs of AI/AN residential clients and program participants. All Friendship House programs are guided by principles and values found in American Indian culture, history, traditions and spirituality.

The FH Healing Model and Community Defined Evidence Practice (CDEP) focuses on healing through strength-based and trauma-informed practices for the population of AI/AN adults, youth and children. Prayer, song, drum circle, sweat lodge, talking circle, traditional healer ceremony, Native gatherings, and many other

tribal and intertribal efforts are integral to FH services. The well-documented record of success is noted in the thousands of AI/ANs that have come through Friendship House doors, embraced healing and wellness, and passed those same values and practices to the next generations. Residential clients assessed at intake and six months later, indicated:

#### IMPROVED

**Psychological and Emotional Well-Being:** Anxiety decreased, from 77% at Intake to 51%, six months later; depression decreased, from 60% to 39%; cognitive/memory impairments decreased, from 47% to 22%; hallucinations decreased, from 8% at Intake to 2%; and suicide attempt decreased, from 2% at Intake to 0.5%, six months later.

**Decision Making:** Making positive choices that led to positive consequences increased from 13% at Intake to 17%, six months later.

#### REDUCED

**Substance Misuse:** Abstinence increased from 38% at Intake to 75%, six months later.

**Criminal Activity:** Arrest-free records increased from 93% at Intake to 98%, six months later.

**Risky Behavior:** Injection of illegal drug use decreased from 10% to 3%; unprotected sexual contact with injection drug user decreased from 6% to 2%; and unprotected sex with an individual high on some substance decreased from 12% at Intake to 6% six months later.

#### INCREASED

**Education/Employment Participation:** Increased from 6% at Intake to 51%, six months later.

**Housing Stability:** Increased slightly, from 15% at Intake to 17%, six months later.

Data collected period: 2018 - 2023. n=643. Findings closely mirror FH data, 2001-2017, n=1,001. Publication link, most recent evaluation of FH programs: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/9efead98-b320-4d73-b094-5bfbe3db2abc>

## Key Friendship House Youth Program Practices for Youth and Young Adult

The Friendship House Youth Program (FHYP) serves AI/AN youth ages 12-24. During the school year, the FHYP provides after-school programs for youth in Grades 6-12 (ages 12-17), and cultural gatherings and activities on weekends with families and community. During the summer, the FHYP expands to a full-day program. **What are the program benefits for participants of FHYP?**

### SAFETY & WELL-BEING

**Wellness Environment:** The Friendship House Youth Program (FHYP) started out as a staff volunteer program. Native parents working at Friendship House needed a safe, structured, nurturing environment for their children to go to after school. So staff members took turns running the informal after-school program. In 2001, FHYP received funding to establish an after-school program for AI/AN youth and children. FHYP's experience in providing services to AI/AN youth and young adults has grown over the last 23+ years, incorporating traditional practices, cultural identity and pride, mastery skills, and sense of belonging for AI/AN children, youth and young adults.

### EDUCATION

**Learning Environment:** FHYP provides after-school programs on weekdays and hosts/co-hosts cultural gatherings and activities on weekends for families and the San Francisco Bay Area AI/AN community. During the summer, FHYP expands to a full-day program. FHYP connects with school-age youth through partnerships with the Indian Education Program (IEP) and schools of the San Francisco Unified School District. As one of the few programs that serve AI/AN youth in San Francisco, the IEP is an important collaborator in addressing the needs of Native students.

FHYP also engages AI/AN young adults (ages 18-24) throughout the year, supporting their transition to adulthood while also cultivating them as leaders in their respective communities, and as agents of change. AI/AN youth can best influence systems transformation by first, knowing and embracing their cultural identity.

### CULTURAL PATH

**Native Foundation:** Friendship House integrates American Indian healing practices with evidence-based methods to address the complex

needs of AI/AN youth and young adults, and their families. Program services and ceremonial activities are guided by the foundational principles of the FH Healing Model and Community Defined Evidence Practice (CDEP). The FH Healing Model and CDEP focuses on healing through strength-based and trauma-informed practices for the population of AI/ANs. Prayer, song, drum circle, sweat lodge, talking circle, traditional healer ceremony, Native gatherings such as Dancing Feathers Powwow, Stronghold Youth Conference, Holiday Gatherings, and many other tribal and intertribal efforts are integral to FH services.

**Native Identity Formation:** FHYP implements methods that reinforce positive Native Identity by focusing on the following key indicators of success:

#### Resiliency, Skills Building, Success in School and Positive Identity/Self-Esteem

FHYP Enrichment Sessions are offered during Fall, Winter, Spring Break and Summer. The **Fall/Winter** sessions incorporates cultural enrichment activities, fostering exploration of cultural identity, and promoting a deeper connection between individual needs and broader community issues. The **Spring Break** sessions encompasses a variety of engaging activities (field trips, culture workshops, recreational outings), designed to provide a well-rounded experience that nurtures personal identity and creativity. The **Summer Sessions** focus on empowering youth to appreciate their unique identities and cultural backgrounds and intergenerational ties to promote self-expression, reflection, resilience, and positive cultural identity amongst AI/AN participants.

In FHYP studies from 2018-2023 (n=112), 84% of FHYP youth surveyed participated in a traditional/cultural ceremony or activity and 82% reported that their family members also participated in ceremony activities. This tells us that our families are engaged in ceremonial practices and that parents are instrumental in connecting their children to FHYP activities. Family members are welcome and strongly encouraged to participate in FHYP gatherings.