

Connections to Culture, Community and Healing

Braiding the Sweetgrass



WHAT BRAIDING THE SWEETGRASS DOES ●●●

Braiding the Sweetgrass (BTS) guides Indigenous families through the effects of intergenerational trauma to a place of well-being. It is a ground-breaking program developed in partnership with Elders which joins Indigenous traditional wisdom with a trauma-informed lens.

Families gain insight, experience and the tools to prevent the transmission of intergenerational trauma (IGT). To effectively heal historic trauma effects, BTS uses a multi-dimensional treatment approach that embraces an understanding of community, family, and personal histories and responds to current feelings, thoughts, and patterns of behavior. The BTS program begins to undo the trauma cycle by:



Introducing or reintroducing culture



Understanding brain development and the stress response and strategies for resilience and coping



Recognizing, accepting and reclaiming history to understand the impact of trauma on self, family and community



Creating opportunities for people to experience a sense of belonging to community



THE NEED FOR SERVICES LIKE BTS ●●●

Historic processes of colonialism and systemic racism have separated Indigenous people from their culture, which has led to community, family and individual suffering. Reported ratings of Indigenous people's well-being are far lower than the general population:

- ☆ Indigenous children make up **69%** of children in the welfare system.
- ☆ Suicide rates are **6 times** higher among Indigenous youth.
- ☆ A large percentage of youth in the correctional system are Indigenous.
- ☆ Generally have poorer health and higher rates of infectious diseases and chronic health issues.
- ☆ Experience more mental health distress which expresses as depression, addictive behaviour, and high stress.

When Indigenous children and their families are given the opportunity to learn about the dark history of Indigenous peoples and related trauma effects and invited to participate in both traditional Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, running parallel with Western therapeutic practices, then they will be better equipped to begin a journey to wellness and healing.



THE IMPACT BTS HAD ON OUR COMMUNITY LAST YEAR ●●●



199 individuals were supported



Over **78** Elders, individuals and families were provided with food hampers in the week before Christmas



Families were provided with referrals and resources to food banks, camp activities, counselling and cultural resources



Families were given access to Elders through home visits or open Elder sessions outside of BTS group gatherings



ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY TO HEALING IN BRAIDING THE SWEETGRASS

"I was looking for connection and healing. I was at a point where I was wading through what spirituality meant to me. I remember the feelings of searching where I fit in. BTS helped me recognize that I am somebody, I'm part of a community and I do have a culture. I am grateful for that. Courage was one of the things that has come to me over the last few months. Recognizing my power and courage to do certain things. The program has helped me come to a place of forgiveness with my mother and father for the past and the things that have happened. I have been having some conversations with them and working to rebuild those relationships and let go of the shame I have felt. Shame from things I have done to my body, things I have done in the past and not living up to the person I thought I should be. I've been really accepting myself and letting go of my shame. I'm stronger than I give myself credit for and just to recognize that is big. And that has helped me get ready for the next chapter in my life. I am going to go back to school. I've been really scared to say that because then it's real. I've been given the courage to do this. I'm going to do that in September. I am feeling really, really grateful for everything I have learned here. It's a real gift that my kids get to be part of it and that I have learned what I have learned and can continue on and share that with the kids. Thank you for the courage. I will carry you all in my heart."

– Person supported through the BTS program



About Hull Services

At Hull Services, we use innovative and evidence-based programs to provide support to children, youth and families experiencing mental health struggles, behavioural problems, developmental delay, neglect, abuse and trauma.

At Hull, our employees are our strength. The level of continuous training our staff receive and their passion and commitment to excellence is what sets Hull apart as a leader in child and youth mental health.

Hull Services is certified in and adheres to the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT) as its trauma-informed model across all programs. The NMT incorporates knowledge and understanding of neuroscience and brain development to inform our work with children, youth and families. Hull is one of a small number of NMT Phase II certified sites in Canada and the only one in the province of Alberta.

Mission

Hull partners with young people and families, building resilience today for a brighter tomorrow.



60

YEARS OF
SUPPORTING
YOUTH AND
FAMILIES

2,803+

VOLUNTEER
HOURS
IN 2021/22

9,182

CHILDREN, YOUTH
AND FAMILIES
WERE SUPPORTED
IN 2021/22

29

PROGRAMS &
SERVICES