



This product was developed by the Full Circle Diabetes Program of the Minneapolis American Indian Center and Native American Community Clinic in Minneapolis, MN. Support for this product was provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation® in Princeton, New Jersey.

# Full Circle Diabetes Program of the Minneapolis American Indian Center and Native American Community Clinic *Diabetes Community Council*



## BACKGROUND

The Minneapolis American Indian Center in collaboration with the Native American Community Clinic received funding from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to plan, test and expand community supports for diabetes care.

- Planning Phase: February 2003 - April 2004
- Implementation Phase: May 2004 - October 2006

We chose the Circle Paradigm of community organizing because of its close relationship to Native American culture and values.



The symbol of the circle encompasses a unique worldview. It recognizes that all people contribute to the survival and vitality of a community through their individual contributions.

The essence of the Circle Paradigm is the participation process. Leadership is not a role that just one person will take on but rather the one in the leadership role at any given time should be the one who has the knowledge to be successful and bring benefits to the community.

## THE CIRCLE MODEL

The program staff and medical providers worked with Native American community members living with or concerned about diabetes to form the Diabetes Community Council. Collectively, we:

- explored current resources
- shared challenges of living with diabetes
- developed the Full Circle Diabetes Program to offer physical, mental, emotional and spiritual support through culturally appropriate community activities and clinical services
- continue to improve and expand programming



## Heading

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

- 1) Invest time to build relationships and trust
  - Meet individually with each council member in order to build relationships and appreciate their personal experiences and unique skills
  - Allow adequate time to share testimonials and develop community priorities prior to finalizing the activities to be included in programming (minimum of six months)
- 2) Integrate wisdom from a variety of partners to provide balanced diabetes programming
  - Listen to and appreciate the wisdom of community members living with diabetes
  - Utilize the skills and knowledge of healthcare providers
- 3) Develop a clear mission and vision
  - Focus on how the collaboration enhance the work of each partner
  - Honor community priorities by putting them into action
  - Keep agendas flexible - to respond to community interests and needs
- 4) Engage council members in facilitation of programming
  - Honor the planning contributions by promoting active facilitation of community activities
  - Provide opportunities to create tangible products

## OUTCOMES

As council members are personally empowered, they actively share their strengths with the community at large. Enhanced community capacity has been manifested through:

- production and nationwide distribution of instructional video "Starting the Journey to Overcome Diabetes: Our Vision"
- facilitators of monthly talking circles
- coordination of intergenerational events
- outreach at community events, schools, universities and conferences
- completion of leaders training and facilitation of Chronic Disease Self-Management Program workshops
- ongoing referrals to the Native American Community Clinic through multiple points of entry into the program
- advocacy for future funding by council members

The Circle Paradigm promotes holistic diabetes programming by:

- expanding capacity to offer a variety of services
- ensuring that services are culturally appropriate
- informing community investment in maintaining the program
- validating clinical protocols and systems
- promoting a common mission through the work of several agencies leading to increased sustainability and decreased costs

*One of our greatest strengths is our involvement and participation working together for a common goal!*  
- Diabetes Community Council member