

Reclaiming Youth Preconference Presentations

Cultures of Respect

While Indigenous societies rear children in what anthropologist Inge Bolin calls cultures of respect, punitive practices have marked Western child-rearing, education, and treatment. Lakota psychologist Martin Brokenleg notes that traditional Native values of Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity— called the Circle of Courage—are validated by resilience science.

A resurgence of authoritarianism and racial conflict has generated growing calls to restore relationships of respect. This preconference merges Native wisdom with modern research to create environments where all children and families thrive. Presentations explore *The Mythology of Race*; *Sweetgrass People*; *Sad, Mad, and Medicated*; and *What's Wrong versus What's Strong*.



The Mythology of Race

Countering theories of racial superiority, early researchers showed Indigenous cultures possessed advanced knowledge of child and youth development. Abraham Maslow studied the Blackfoot people of Canada whose generosity inspired his theory of human development. Ella Deloria described her Dakota Sioux upbringing: treat everyone you know as a relative. This presentation highlights the evidence-base of the Circle of Courage and offers practical strategies to connect with kids in conflict.

Larry Brendtro, Director, Reclaiming Youth at Risk, Lennox, SD



Sweetgrass People: Resilience Culture

Indigenous cultures rear respectful, responsible children without reverting to coercive discipline. The Circle of Courage is a model of resilience, the capacity to surmount difficulty and thrive. Just as sweetgrass is resilient in the wind, so these Indigenous principles are transforming families, schools, and group settings. Circle of Courage values are a birthright to Indigenous youth and a gift to all children.

Anna Brokenleg, Native American Connections Facilitator, Hawthorne Elementary School, Sioux Falls, SD



Sad, Mad, and Medicated

As neurochemical interventions dominate interpersonal relationships, our most vulnerable youth are imperiled. Most teens in treatment prefer therapeutic support to medicating their symptoms. As Abraham Maslow noted, behavior problems usually result from unmet developmental needs, so these should become the primary focus of interventions. Current research and practice call for a reorientation toward relationship-based child and youth care.

Robert Foltz, Child and Adolescent Track Faculty, Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Chicago, IL



From What's Wrong to What's Strong

Deficit-based assessment targets risk but ignores resilience, while strength-based assessment reframes problems as opportunities for growth. As the ultimate experts on their lives, youth must have a voice in their futures. A process called *Planning Restorative Outcomes* applies to a range of problems from brief crisis intervention to serious trauma. Strength-based assessment transforms Positive Behavior Support in schools and treatment planning in residential, community, or justice settings.

Mark Freado, Director, Growing Edge Training, Westerville, OH