



Nechi Institute on Alcohol and Drug Education



Royal Canadian
Mounted Police

Gendarmerie royale
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A Program for Aboriginal Youth

The Aboriginal Shield Program is a substance abuse prevention program specifically for aboriginal youth.

Designed by the NECHI Institute and the RCMP Drug Awareness Program to supplement existing substance abuse education programs and school curriculum units, it provides police officers with materials and techniques to educate aboriginal youth about substance abuse issues.

A Cultural Approach to Substance Abuse Prevention

Experience has proven that aboriginal abuse prevention programs must bridge a gap by providing students with a cultural framework for decision-making.

The Aboriginal Shield Program helps youth feel pride in their heritage by helping them identify with the traditions and spiritual teachings of their aboriginal culture. The program helps them make choices about the dangers of drugs, smoking, impaired driving and inhalants. It also focuses on the positive aspects of building strong healthy relationships within the context of the traditional aboriginal community.

The Aboriginal Dream Shield

Drawing on the symbolism of the traditional dream shield as a physical and mental protector from the negative influences of the night, the Aboriginal Shield Program takes an holistic approach to protecting the minds, spirits and bodies of students.

The program presents students with practical information they can use to shield themselves from the hazards of alcohol and drug abuse. With this

personal shield, young aboriginal people are better prepared to overcome the power and influence of the negative forces in their lives.

Culture.

Prevention and Positive Alternatives

The Aboriginal Shield Program consists of four teaching modules taught by police officers. The first contains lessons which promote aboriginal culture. The last three modules deal with prevention and decision-making.

The program teaches students about culturally acceptable alternatives to abuse. Through classroom activities, presentations and discussions, students are presented with positive alternatives to the destructive choices and influences all around them.

In addition to providing information about the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse, the Aboriginal Shield Program is designed to:

- *provide positive alternatives to drug use,*
- *enhance cultural awareness,*
- *raise self-esteem,*
- *encourage group decision-making,*
- *promote healthy lifestyles.*
- *enhance the relationship between the police and the aboriginal communities they are serving.*

For more information about the *Aboriginal Shield Program* please contact your regional RCMP Drug Awareness Coordinator.