Mi’kmaw Legal Support Network

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The Purpose of MLSN:

Is to develop and maintain a sustainable justice support system for all Mi’kmaw and Aboriginal people in the Nova Scotia justice system.

The Goal of MLSN:

Is to develop and maintain a new relationship between the Criminal Justice System and the Mi’kmaw and Aboriginal people of Nova Scotia.
Program Locations

Halifax and Area

Truro and Area

Cape Breton and Area

Strait Area
Overview of MLSN Programs

Since MLSN has been in existence a number of initiatives have taken place to improve the administration of justice for Mi'kmaw and Aboriginal people in Nova Scotia.

- Victim Support Services
- Building a Bridge
- Mi’kmaq Venture Program
- Justice Committees
Overview of MLSN Programs

- Court Worker Program
- Customary Law Program
- Mi'kmaw Inclusion in Regulatory Offences
- Mi'kmaw Interpreters Program
- Gladue Reports
- Cultural Gatherings
Customary Law Program

How is success measured?

In the Customary Law Program; SUCCESS is measured by how well the young person begins to recognize the full impact and consequences of their behaviour, and actively participates in making things right.
The following table demonstrates the conflict between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal values in a court setting:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Western Justice</th>
<th>Traditional Aboriginal Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>European concept of guilty/not guilty</td>
<td>Guilt is a feeling and a teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accused has the right against self-incrimination. It is not dishonest to plead</td>
<td>It is dishonest to plead not guilty if one has played a role in a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not guilty to a committed offence</td>
<td>crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleading guilty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testifying</td>
<td>As part of the process, witnesses testify in front of accused</td>
<td>Reluctance to testify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Expectation to tell the &quot;whole truth&quot;</td>
<td>It is impossible to know the &quot;whole truth&quot; in any situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witnesses</td>
<td>Only certain people are called to testify in relation to specific subjects</td>
<td>The community gathers to engage in storytelling and identify ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to promote healing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Justice</td>
<td>Traditional Aboriginal Justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye contact</strong></td>
<td>Eye contact conveys that one is being truthful</td>
<td>Eye contact with a person of authority is a sign of disrespect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verdict</strong></td>
<td>Accused is expected to show remorse and a desire for rehabilitation</td>
<td>Accused must accept what comes to him/her without a show of emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incarceration / probation</strong></td>
<td>Means of punishing/rehabilitating offender</td>
<td>Completely absolves Aboriginal offender of responsibility of restitution to victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Function of Justice</strong></td>
<td>Promotes conformity, punish Deviant behavior and protect society</td>
<td>Healing, restoring balance, and providing guidance and support to an offender, victim, and community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wela’lioq
Mi’kmaw Venture Program
M'ikmaq Venture Program

Three year pilot initiative; Pictou Landing, Indianbrook, Memebertou and Eskasoni
Statistically proven to have success with Aboriginal youth in the reducing of drug and alcohol abuse.
National Indian Youth Leadership project, Gallop New Mexico.
First Canadian Project Venture site.
Positive youth development and experiential approach.
Supported by community working group members.
Funded by National Crime Prevention Centre of Canada.
Mi’kmaw Venture Program

Outdoor adventure activities include ropes course, rappelling, canoeing, backpacking, camping, mountain biking, etc.

Service Learning projects are youth centered and designed to address culture, environmental and other community needs.

Cultural and Native values based leadership
Based on traditional wisdom and values of our Mi’kmaq People.
M i’kmaw Venture Program

Population
Middle school aged Aboriginal youth (grades 5-8) 20 participants per community

Program Components
Experiential education
Connection to outdoor adventure and natural world
Physical and emotional challenges
Service Learning

Service Learning
Active learning
Connections to the academic themes
School or community service
Critical thinking and analysis skills
Connections to culture and language
*Roots & Shoots
Culturally based leadership
Service ethic in tribal context
Language, history and values
Cross-cultural exchange and awareness
Elder/intergenerational
MVP Program Delivery

Sequence of progressive programming
Physical, emotional safety
Four components of programming:
  In school
  After school
  Weekends
  Summer
In-School Component

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES
- Ice Breakers
- Socialization
- Team Building
- Problem Solving
- Trust Building
- Skill Building
Out-of-School Component

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES
- Team Building
- Problem Solving
- Skill Building
- Trust Building
Weekend Extended Trips

Extended trips/treks during school vacation breaks include:

- Increasingly challenging experiential activities such as,
  - High Ropes Course
  - Hiking, Camping
  - Rappelling, Biking
  - Cultural experiences
Summer Camps/Treks

4 to 8 days in length
Mi’kmaq values and norms
Service ethic
Nutrition principles
Journaling
Connect with natural world and spiritual understanding.
M'kmaq Cultural Values

M VP continues the ongoing process of adapting experiential learning to complement our traditional values and teachings.

Some of the teachings will include:

- Medicine
- Sweets
- Wigwams
- Drumming
- Dancing
- Language
- Hunting/Fishing
- Moose Harvest
- Canoeing
- Sports
- Storytelling
- Games
Service Learning

Youth led
Meaningful
“Service Leadership” ethic
Projects begin with simple, move to complex
Relationships emphasized
Culturally relevant
Skill building
Reflection and dialogue
FUN!

Having fun is critical to success in experiential programming. Fun serves a purpose in supporting participants as they struggle to complete challenges, overcome obstacles, and solve difficult problems.