



Boozhoo, Aaniin,

My name is Wabanungoquay Alakayak which means Morning Star Woman in Anishinaabe, the woman canoe. (In Yupik Eskimo). I am an Anishinaabe-kwe whose ancestral homeland is near Gitchi-Gumee, known as Lake Superior. I am a member of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and have a deep connection to our land, water, air, and all the natural resources that have been here since time immemorial. My knowledge comes from Mother Earth, and all the beings that live on her. I am Makwa Doodem, (bear clan) and have a long-standing relationship with Mashkikii or the plant and tree medicine that is here

to help us. My cultural role is in my blood, a genetic imprint and has been in my family since time immemorial. Our generations are still here, no matter what has happened to us. The strength of my character and courage comes from my ancestors, and from the hardship that I have endured in my life.

I am presenting on Mino-Bimaadiziwin, principles for an Anishinaabe “good life,” Our elders have provided us with direction, we have been told by our elders from across Turtle island that it is not one nation, but many nations that survive on this land. We have been told to stand strong in our teachings, in our language, and to learn our culture, history, and heritage. Mino-Bimaadiziwin, is a way of life that brings us into balance, spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally.

I teach a Mino-Bimaadiziwin group at “Oshki Gijigad,” “New day” a Native American residential and outpatient treatment facility for alcohol and chemical dependence. We believe that chemical dependency is a disease, and this disease creates an imbalance and disharmony in one’s life. We feel this disease can be treated and that people if given the opportunity will create honest, sincere changes in their lives. We believe that assisting individuals to regain or gain balance and harmony back into one’s life through, an environment that is safe and secure, so that individuals can feel loved and accepted, and improve feelings of self-respect and self-esteem. We believe that all people ultimately would like to benefit physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally, our treatment philosophy is to encourage individuals to use the seven grandfather teachings, and use love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth which adds to wisdom to accomplish this goal.

My presentation will be on the seven grandfather teachings, and the seven aspects of Mino-Bimaadiziwin and how we can utilize these to create balance and harmony in our lives. Each of us have been given the gift of Mino-Bimaadiziwin the good life, in our language, the way we act, the way we think and the way we choose to be. We can choose to live Mino-Bimaadiziwin, the way our ancestors did. To return to this way of life, we must return to who we were originally, in our language, our teachings, and our way of life. Bishkaabayang, the returning to our teachings, is the first step in the process of being Anishinaabe. We have designed a curriculum to help our people to return to this way of life.

Chi-Miigwech,

Wabanungoquay