

Buffalo Hide Academy:

April 2021

Hosting Hardin

Buffalo Hide Academy was honored to host a group of educators from Hardin, MT who are very interested in starting an Alternative School and in having their larger district adopt the concepts of Trauma Informed Support, Restorative Practices, Student Centered Learning and healing communities affected by Cultural and Historical Trauma.

The visitors included Hardin Superintendent Chad Johnson, High School and Middle School Administrators, Instructional Coaches, School Psychologist, and members of the instructional staff.

Buffalo Hide Staff started with a presentation that incorporated our:

- Student voice curriculum and credit recovery:

Jason Krane and Nick Rink discussed, in detail, the evolution of our Student Voice curriculum and the continuation of students having a say in what and how they learn. Additionally, we went provided our framework for the many facets that our Independent Learning Center plays, including credit recovery (and how it works), independent learning, and Project Based Learning, and pointing out the differences between these options and our full-group instruction. To end this session, Nick Rink discussed the philosophy of “Restorative Circles” and led one during which all present shared his/her thoughts/emotions/ideas regarding next steps in implementing an Alternative Ed. Setting in the Hardin school district.

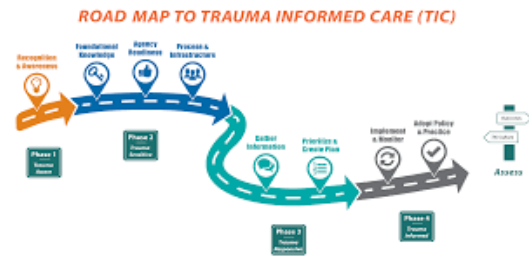


Restorative Circles

- **Fundamentals of Trauma Informed Care and Support:**

We covered the basic elements of a trauma informed school including:

- Identifying and assessing traumatic stress;
- Addressing and treating traumatic stress;
- Teaching trauma education and awareness;
- Having partnerships with students and families;
- Creating a trauma-informed learning environment (social/emotional skills and wellness).



Restorative Practices:

We covered the fundamentals of Restorative Practices including building, maintaining and repairing relationships to form healthy, supportive and inclusive communities. In a school context Restorative Justice is about:

- **Creating a culture of relationships and building safe school climates;**
- **Developing social and emotional skills;**
- **Creating time and space for people to build community and make things right;**
- **Unloading our personal issues so we can be inclusive teachers and focused learners.**



Promoting Community through Cultural Integration:

The discussion here was around creating and maintaining positive relationships in the community. Being present and participating in community in events. Using restorative practices to foster better listening skills and habits. Seeing the culture and community as an asset and not an obstacle.

Following is a portion of the email correspondence:

"Chad Johnson down here in Hardin...I wanted to start off by saying THANK YOU for allowing a small group of us to come up and visit your 1) alternative school sites AND 2) your school-based health systems. As you may know, we are currently researching BOTH in hopes of initial/partial implementation the fall of 2021 and full-scale implementation the fall of 2022. We have also been referred to your schools as they are the "Top models of Montana".

We also took time to offer resources and answer any questions that the group had. The questions ranged from the nuts and bolts of credit recovery and transcripts to deeper discussions regarding therapeutic support for traumatized students.

QUESTIONS:

- What are their daily schedules and class sizes?
- What is their curriculum? What does it include? English, Math, Sci, Hist, soft skills, study skills, social-emotional learning, etc.
- How do they handle high school credit? Do they use an assessment to show mastery of standards?
- Are they MHSA qualified?
- What are the certifications of your staff working with these students?
- Do you have outside entities (Acadia, Youth Dynamics, ???) provide services onsite or do you hire qualified district personnel?

This was a great experience and we wish the Hardin students and the Crow community the best of luck in this important endeavor.