

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	2.0	Workforce Development
Sub Program:	2.3	Supporting Recruitment, Retention and Advancement
Template:	2.3.5	Courage to Care
Sponsor(s)	<i>Suncor Energy Inc.</i>	

1. Objective

A workplace and community-based addictions treatment and prevention initiative intended to decrease addictions as a barrier to employment and increase the number of healthy individuals available for training and employment, sponsored by Suncor in two Aboriginal communities - Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan.

2. Description of Program

The Courage to Care Program is designed to address the behaviours and attitudes involved in enabling addictions and addictive behaviour by workers, family and community members. The program engages the community in addressing these behaviours by adopting both individual and community strategies to more effectively help those with addictions.

The Program is primarily focused on reducing the personal and organizational risks associated with impairment resulting from addiction and mental health issues. Courage to Care achieves results through its capacity to change attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in the workplace, the family and the community. This comprehensive process involves four steps: engagement and assessment; education and awareness; encouragement and support; and evaluation. It also has an extensive community component.

3. Implementation

Suncor has sponsored this program in two Aboriginal communities - Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan. In both communities a community engagement process was used to involve a broad range of community members - including health workers, addictions councillors, RCMP, leadership, community workers and community members. A series of information sessions was then conducted to raise awareness of the program and to encourage community members and organizations to become involved in taking the training sessions, and, ultimately, take over the program and continue it in the community. Over a three year period, a number of sessions were conducted - training community members and organizations in the principles of the program. Through this process other areas of interest were identified and specific training programs were set up to address the particular interests and needs of the community - such as training in co-dependency, setting up a healing-day celebration, involvement in Addictions Awareness week

activities, participation in community career and trade fairs, and talks and sessions at local schools.

4. Timeframe for Results

This program was supported for three years in each community. The expectation was that at the end of the three-year period, sufficient community members will have been trained and could take over the program and run it as a community-led initiative. Funding covered the cost for the consultants to work with the community and to conduct the training sessions.

5. Measurable Criteria

These include:

- an increase in knowledge of community members about all aspects of addictions and how addictions impact individuals, families, and communities;
- an increase in awareness of enabling behaviours and how these behaviours impact the addicted person;
- an increase in individuals taking specific actions to reduce their enabling behaviour;
- an increase in individuals committing to different behaviours which benefit themselves, their families and their community;
- an increase in the number of community members attending training sessions;
- identified community members who have committed to continuing the program in the community;
- an increase in the number of community members who choose to address their own addiction behaviours and take positive action to wellness; and
- an increase in the number of community members who are healthy and available to take on employment.

6. Budget

\$30,000 per year for three years for each community.

7. Partners and Sponsors

Suncor Energy Inc.

8. Experience with the Program

Addictions have been identified as a serious social issue and a major barrier to employment in a number of studies and reports conducted in the region – including a health study conducted by the University of Alberta, statistics from FNHIB, AADAC and other agencies working in the region. The 2003 Labour Pool Analysis conducted through the Athabasca Tribal Council All-Parties Core Agreement also identified addictions as a barrier to employment.

Community response to the program has been very good and most community members find the program fits well with community and Aboriginal values and culture. It is critical to plan and

execute a thorough community engagement process to raise awareness of the program and to get support from key community members. It is very important to get leadership support. Suncor found the program provided an excellent venue for different organizations to come together and gain mutual understanding and collaborative planning to address this serious social issue. One of the unexpected benefits of the program has been the individuals who have completed the program taking a more active role in the community and setting up their own program in cultural retention. There is also a stronger focus in the communities on healthy living, wellness and the connection between wellness and employment and economic opportunities. Leadership support has been very good and in one community specific strategies were employed, in part inspired by Courage to Care, which has led to a significant decrease in prescription drug issues.

9. General Applicability

The program is suitable for any workplace or community where addictions are an issue.

10. Additional Information or Support

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