



Culture and Person-Centered Practices: Joseph Ray Eagle – “A Pueblo Perspective”

SPEAKERS

Joseph Ray Eagle

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This is Joseph Ray.

I'm up in Morrison, Colorado, Red Rocks...state...Red Rock Park.

I wanted to talk today about what NCAPPS means to me... National Center for Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems.

That's a huge word, a huge, big term for a lowly native like me to really embrace. Like, what does that mean? But how I interpret it in my world is that when I was a child growing up in the reservation community that I grew up in, I could go to almost every home and be welcomed with food, discipline, or a combination of both.

And that's how it was in our community of about 100 households. Each of us had an interest in the life that we were leading and if we were being...if we were OK and if we were happy as children. We as people need to come back together and remember these principles of what person-centered practices are. It's again, it's me and you as human beings relating and remembering the Golden Rule: to treat each other with respect.

Back at home in the Pueblo Laguna where I'm from - 50 miles west of Albuquerque - we practice, we try and practice these words to be... to love one another, to respect one another, to take care of one another, and it's difficult at times. But again, we believe that as American Indian Pueblo people, those are our core beliefs.

That's what has sustained us as people over the millennium is that we care about each other. We help each other. We help each other in our fields, our farms, building homes, caring for our elders. Caring for our elders is something dear to me because again, I've been doing it all my life for my grandmother. When I was a teenage boy, I had to be the caregiver for my grandmother and she, she would feel so bad about it, and she would be embarrassed that I would have to assist



her in the bathroom. She would be so embarrassed and cry, but I didn't, I didn't accept that. I also was, I was in... I was upset. I wanted to be out with my friends with my buddies having a good time, but I cherish those moments now providing care to my grandmother. Many years later, my grandfather, we were able to care for him at his own home. He passed away at home, but many others don't have the opportunity.

Many of our elders end up in nursing homes away from their tribal community. There are only 20 tribally run nursing homes in the United States based on tribal land.

So, in return, our tribal elders, have to leave the reservation to foreign places that they, perhaps have never been to, perhaps English is not their first language. So again, these reminders of person-centered practices really comes... I take to heart because again, it means the care that my elders receive at home and away from home. Thank you very much.

I wanted to talk today about how person-centered practices and systems are a difficult concept at times for my community at the Pueblo Laguna to understand because of the nature of our history as being communal, tribal of course, we're tribal people and so many times, the task... we were taught in the past, don't think about yourself.

Don't be lazy, go out and help your grandmothers, go out and help your uncle in the field, go help your aunt take the laundry off the line. All these things to help others and then you think about yourself at the end of the day so person-centered practices, I believe have a place in our community and that's for our service providers when they're interacting with our elders and others and everybody that they visit and interact with during their day, their provision of those health care services or whatever that might be, whether they work in the market.

Always show respect. That's how we were raised. That's how it should be so thank you.