

Around the Fire:

Talking Circles for Diabetes Care and Prevention
The Traditions of Gratitude Series



English

Sam English®



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The Around the Fire image celebrates the tradition of talking circles, an ancient way of gathering groups of people to discuss important issues. Each person has a turn to speak while all others in the circle listen carefully. The image was inspired by Lorelei DeCora's (enrolled member, Ho-Chunk Nation, Winnebago, Nebraska) tireless efforts to bring Diabetes Talking Circles to Indian Country. Four reservation communities in South Dakota and Nebraska participated in a study that demonstrate the value of talking circles in promoting hope for people with diabetes. A Diabetes Talking Circles curriculum is available from the Seva Foundation <http://www.seva.org/diabetes.php>.

This image, one of three in the Traditions of Gratitude Series, was developed to honor traditional wisdom and evidence-based science portrayed through culturally relevant messages promoting health, diabetes prevention, and diabetes care. The three images honor Community Health Representatives (CHRs), Diabetes Talking Circles, and the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). CHRs and Diabetes Talking Circles provide support and education that make a positive difference for people living with diabetes. In 2001, the DPP, with 3,234 participants, including 171 American Indians, confirmed that type 2 diabetes can often be prevented or delayed by adopting a lifestyle of regular physical activity and healthy eating. Practicing traditional ways of healthy eating, being physically active, holding talking circles, and engaging CHRs can help people live well with diabetes and prevent type 2 diabetes in their communities.

The poster is a print of an original water color painting created by Anishinabe artist, Sam English, renowned for his colorful and spiritually-inspired imagery. As an artist and activist in public health and social justice, Mr. English has been an outspoken advocate for sobriety in the substance abuse prevention movement in Indian Country. Diagnosed with diabetes in 2001, Mr. English did not know until creating these images that there was hope for diabetes prevention and the prevention of complications due to diabetes. Mr. English is now a vital part of the 'voice' that shares the hope for healing that Indian people and people everywhere long to hear.

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