

TRIBAL JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP IN HEALING TO WELLNESS COURTS

**Adult Tribal Healing to
Wellness Courts
Webinar Series**

January 6-9, 2026

www.WellnessCourts.org
Wellness@TLPI.org

Hon. Carrie E. Garrow

Associate Appellate Justice,
Penobscot Nation Tribal Court



► DISCLAIMER

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TRIBAL LAW AND POLICY INSTITUTE

A Native American operated non-profit:

Dedicated to providing free publication resources, comprehensive training, and technical assistance for Native nations and Tribal justice systems in pursuit of our vision to empower Native communities to create and control their own institutions for the benefit of all community members, now, and for future generations.



► OBJECTIVES

- Understand leadership
- Learn how traditional stories can teach leadership skills
- Learn how traditional stories can help Healing to Wellness Judges be leaders



▶ WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

“Leadership in Indigenous communities was based on the character of the land and the needs of the people in their traditional territories.”



▶ WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

A wise practice

Locally-appropriate

Contributes to the development of sustainable and equitable conditions.

Contextual



► WHY IS JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT?

Move
forward

Help not
harm

See the
person



► THE HOW

In a study on Indigenous leadership, a researcher noted that leaders “gained influence by being there, waiting patiently in the background, and demonstrating their deeper interest in both the material and spiritual welfare of the community. Leadership for these indigenous leaders was a relational process that was co-constructed slowly over time.” Steward, *Between Two Worlds*, 12-13.



STORIES



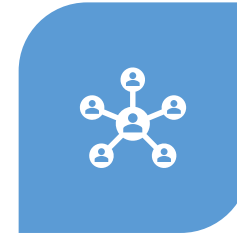
**Provide many of
the guiding lights
to show us our way
on Earth**



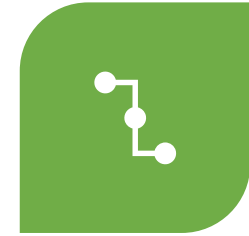
**Provide powerful
bridges**



**Bond us with our
communities by
giving us a
common
understanding**



**Help us learn and
build connections
to our
communities.**



**“[Listeners] link
the stories they’ve
heard about their
ancestors with the
stories they are
living. This linking
of narratives
breathes meaning
into their world...”**



▶ STORIES



Telling the true narrative of Indigenous peoples helps us heal, as we reclaim our story.



**Indigenous scholar Daniel Justice -
“[stories] can drive out the poison, heal the spirit as well as the body, remind us of the greatness of where we came from as well as the greatness of who we’re meant to be, so that we’re not determined by the colonial narrative of deficiency.”**



“If the simplistic deficiency accounts are all we see, all we hear, and all that's expected of us, it's hard to find room for the more nourishing stories of significance.”



► EVALUATION

The judge – you are the leader in the evaluation. If you don't show the way, the evaluation will not happen!



ORIGIN OF MAPLE SYRUP



INCENTIVES AND SANCTIONS





LEADING WITH GRATITUDE



► OUR OWN STORIES

- Push the narrative of deficiency out of the way and fill the narrative with truth.
- The truth in our stories nourishes us.
- It gives us hope.
- Reminds us of who we are.
- “Perhaps the most wounding way in which this story of Indigenous deficiency works is in how it displaces our other stories, the stories of complexity, hope, and possibility. If the simplistic deficiency accounts are all we see, all we hear, and all that's expected of us, it's hard to find room for the more nourishing stories of significance.” Daniel Justice
- When we share our stories, we discover we are not alone









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THANK YOU!



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