

Working with Brookland Manor Youth



Introduction

The “**Love-More**” **Indigenous Leader Training (ILT)** program has had a positive impact on the youth at Brookland Manor Apartments. Love-More ILT is an environmental strategy used to develop grassroots leaders to build healthy, safe, thriving and drug free communities. The Brookland Manor Youth have gone through a series of group conversations with no judgments or filters and then built scripts, poems, songs and other forms of creative expression from these “Real-Life” situations. Through this process they learned how to Love-More through life’s dilemmas, develop transformative strategies, interpret these strategies as workable solutions and creatively present these solutions to the greater community. Using the framework for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy(CBT), Love-More ILT has proven to be an organic, grass roots interpretation of CBT using creative expression in combination with open and honest communication.

The project goal for Brookland Manor Youth was to provide a medium for expression of truths without judgment, while opening up opportunities for self- discovery, cultural identity, self-worth, civic and social engagement and a the Redefinition of “Cool”.

Love-More also offered a creative and strategic focused outreach, engagement and development process for the Brookland Manor Youth to identify, examine and impact root causes of substance use and the connected local conditions.

Love-More ILT has also provided a trauma informed, positive youth developmental approach using the visual and performing arts, communication and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to build bridges to healthy, safe and drug free lifestyles.

Consistent traumatic experiences can reshape a youths’ lens/schema from seeing a safe world full of Love, opportunity and hope to a world that is unsafe, depressed and stressful. Because of their limited verbal capacity, or because of the challenging content, it may be difficult for the child to accurately describe or verbalize traumatic experiences to caregivers. Love-More becomes a treatment modality that can open up verbal pathways for youth to start talking about the root wounds, which are many times the root causes of risky behaviors later in life, such as substance use, unsafe sex, truancy, as well as violent and criminal behaviors.

The most powerful characteristic of Love-More ILT is that it allowed a natural healing and empowerment process to take place through open and honest communication and creative expression with no clinical titles. The leadership of Dr. Bruce Purnell, a psychologist, writer and community activist, Ersky Freeman, a professional actor and playwright, Ayanna Gregory, a singer, actor and motivational speaker, Jovan Davis, a Transformative Life Coach and Creative Director and a group of phenomenal Resilient Indigenous Leaders added the nuts and bolts to a creative movement designed to heal and empower our most vulnerable communities. Love-More ILT has also left a residual impact on parents, caregivers and mentors who have become a part of Transformative Life Cycles, Circles and Coaches (TLC’s) continuing this creative process within their own infrastructures such as families, schools and churches.

The Brookland Manor Youth as a part of the Love-More ILT Have:

1. Participated in Therapeutic Empowerment, Transformation and Healing Groups
2. Recorded Music and Videos of positive themes in the Love-More Recording Studio
3. Written Scripts and PSA's for positive youth development
4. Taken numerous field trips with Transformative Life Coaches