Peace Education Program
The Prem Rawat Foundation

An Empowering Approach to Strengthening Communities

Program Overview
- The Prem Rawat Foundation’s Peace Education Program is a series of video-based, facilitated workshops that help people discover their inner strengths and personal peace.
- Reflection time, discussion and activities give participants the opportunity to focus on their own humanity and to develop greater personal awareness.
- The program empowers individuals to reach their own understanding. There is no homework, right or wrong answers or exams.
- The goal of the course is to promote individual self-discovery, something that is unique for each person.

Workshop material is drawn from the insightful presentations of best-selling author Prem Rawat (‘Peace is Possible’ © 2019 and ‘Hear Yourself: How to Find Peace in a Noisy World’ © 2022), including international addresses, media interviews and interactions with a diverse range of people during his 50 years as a peace advocate.

The program consists of 10 workshops based on the themes of peace, appreciation, inner strength, self-awareness, clarity, understanding, dignity, choice, hope and contentment. Each workshop includes short videos, animated stories, facilitated reflection time, participant discussions, workshop activities and reading materials.

In building community capacity, the Peace Education Program has proven effective in correctional and justice related settings, community centers, youth groups, schools, healthcare, homeless shelters and substance abuse treatment facilities. The evidence-based program has been presented in 80 countries and 40 languages, including 100,000 people in the criminal justice system.

Studies in Corrections, Parole and Community Care

1. Peace Education Program for Parolees and Community Supervision

Since 2018, Commit2Change in Alice Springs, Australia, has offered the Peace Education Program to parolees and community corrections clients. At the end of 2020, 120 people had completed the full program. Commit2Change serves “high needs offenders who are assessed as suitable for community sentencing but need addiction-focused support to remain in the community”.

The program’s mission is “to reconnect to their culture. Connecting to culture, family, self-esteem and inner strength provides anchors that help prevent disempowered addictive behaviors which may lead to further incarceration. The Peace Education Program, with its focus on inner resources and self-empowerment, helps break this cycle—resulting in its high attendance and completion rates, word of mouth recommendations and positive feedback.

Peace Education Program attendees at Commit2Change range from 17 to 55 years of age. Seventy-five percent are Indigenous. The imprisonment rate for Indigenous people in the Northern Territory is disproportionately—26.8% of the total population is Indigenous, compared to 88% of the prison population. Alienation due to 230 years of colonization and forced removal from family and country has led to substance use disorder and violence, often resulting in incarceration as the accepted rite of passage.

The Peace Education Program participants say connecting once again to their traditional culture and to the land is a necessary healing for them, and when they feel inner peace, they are naturally motivated to reconnect to their culture.

Participants’ comments include:

- “This has completely changed my life. For the first time ever, I feel that it is possible for me to have a happy life.”
- “I must not dwell on stuff I cannot control.”

2. Ohio Domestic Violence Intervention Court: Peace Education Program Study Shows Benefits for Clients and Court Staff Alike

Summary
- At the American Probation and Parole (APPA) Winter Training Institute 2021, a probation officer of the Summit County Court of Common Pleas Domestic Violence Intervention Court (DVIC) presented the Peace Education Program and felt inspired by the possibilities to bring the information back to her court. A virtual introduction to the course was provided to have the entire court staff participate in the program together. The success of this course among participants led to approval for a pilot in 2022.

Background
- DVIC is a specialized Domestic Violence Drug Court certified by the Supreme Court of Ohio to supervise felony-level, domestic violence offenders within Summit County, Ohio. Their specialized probation program supervises high-risk, repeat domestic violence offenders in the community with the aim to end the cycle of intergenerational violence.

Evaluation
- The court was interested to ascertain if the Peace Education Program could be implemented successfully for their clients—perhaps showing positive attitudinal adjustment and better stress coping skills. The team decided to experience the ten-session course, facilitated virtually, for themselves first. Twelve members of the DVIC team, including the presiding judge, program director, prosecuting attorneys, probation officers, collaborative agency and community partners participated in and completed the Peace Education Program. The program was so successful with the team that it was then offered to a group of six clients as a ‘pilot’ program, along with the attendance of two new probation officers.

Solution
- Since the pilot program was completed in March 2022, the Peace Education Program has been implemented as a requirement for DVIC staff and clients alike, with a staff member facilitating the program. Clients and staff now engage in the Peace Education Program together, and most clients have communicated that doing so has allowed them to see the professionals on the team in a more “human” light. The officers have also suggested that, due to completing the program together, the connection and bond between officer and offender has grown.

It is nothing short of an honor to be part of something as powerful as your Foundation and this program. The way in which these workshops are structured makes for a new and enlightening experience each time I facilitate.”

- > Christina Ciar, DVIC Peace Education Program Facilitator

The Summit County Domestic Violence Intervention Court encourages any agency, particularly those who encounter violence, crime, and the repercussions of these actions on a daily basis, to investigate the benefits of The Prem Rawat Foundation’s Peace Education Program. Its contributions to our program have been immense, and the support this program continues to provide our staff is immeasurable.”

- > Dr. Dena Harley, DVIC Program Director

3. Assessment of Peace Education Program in Correctional Facilities across Four Continents and Seven Countries

In April 2020, Donald Sheppard of ACE Insights, New Zealand, completed an Impact Assessment of the Peace Education Program that was facilitated in correctional facilities across four continents and in seven countries.

The Sample
- Survey forms were used in the research of 604 participants who completed the Peace Education Program in correctional facilities between 2018 and 2019. The participants represented a variety of countries: US, UK, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Australia, and Trinidad and Tobago. Age of survey respondents: 20 to 80 years with a median age of 42.

Rating and Questions
- Participants rated the course using a rating scale from “1” (strongly disagree) to “5” (strongly agree). They were asked to give the course an overall rating of “5” (very positive). The level of agreement for ten statements related to the ten themes of the Peace Education Program indicated their understanding both before and after participating in the program.

Results
- Both quantitatively and qualitatively, Peace Education Program participants from correctional institutions strongly endorsed the value of the course.

- There was a significant increase in positive ratings, led by “understand that by knowing my inner strengths and resources, I can be more self-aware and live my life more consciously.” (+57 percentage points.)

- 89% of participants reported improvement in at least one of the areas measured, and 63% reported improvement in seven or more areas.

- Attitudinal changes included realizing there is still time to change, being willing to change, being able to face past events, and feeling empowered.

- Behavioral changes such as managing anger and avoiding fighting were noted. Positive results were recorded for all sub-groups by age, gender and highest educational level — showing the Program has a positive impact in this regard for all types of people.

4. Peace Education Program Evaluation Underscores ‘Paradigm Shift’ for Homeless in South Africa

An independent Peace Education Program evaluation by the Johannesburg Department of Social Development found that the 95% of participants living in homeless shelters during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced a “paradigm shift” in their value system from anger, self-pity and low self-esteem to enhanced self-awareness, tolerance, love, inner peace, contentment and self-reliance.

The program helped participants look at their lives and situation differently as they recognized their ability to leverage their inner strengths.