



Respect Works Here

Community Champion

As a young boy, looking for a way to please people, and to fit in, **Lane Brewer** started down a path into addictions. In his early 30s he knew he needed to change the lifestyle and went into recovery. Today, he uses his learned lessons to help people in his community get back on track also. As an Addictions Counsellor for the Okanagan Indian Band for the last nine years, Lane's significant impact led to this recognition as a Community Champion.

"It's humbling and definitely an honor," he says. "I am not usually one who feels comfortable being recognized. I like being behind the scenes, but sometimes it's nice to be shown that what I do is appreciated."

For Lane, being open and honest about his past addictions is an important part of his work. He sees people's ability to adapt their strongest survival technique and he is clear that change can only come about with acknowledgment and taking responsibility for actions.

"I recognized when I was in treatment, that the people I connected with the most, were people who had lived the lifestyle, who had been there before."

Lane had always loved books, and realizing that keeping busy would be a key factor in his recovery, he began studying to complete his high school diploma as he was home.

He learned of a new program for Addictions Counselling through the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and realized it would be a great new road for him to take.

"I had been through a lot and the people in my community had seen that," he shares honestly. "I figured with some education behind me and my learned experience, I could make an impact."

Lane's passion to help is evident and he loves to share hope so that his clients know they can overcome their trials. He is proud to see these clients transition. "They are the ones doing the work, but I was a part of some of these success stories. It's nice to see families reunited and people going back to work," he says.

For Lane, connecting to his First Nations heritage has been critical to his recovery.

"When I went to Round Lake (a nearby recovery centre focusing on First Nations teachings), that was about cultural identity and personal identity, and awakening my spirit," says Lane.

“I know who I am. I am not seeking anymore and a lot of that understanding came through the cultural teachings.”

~Lane Brewer

"I never knew a lot about who I was as a First Nations person and Round Lake really helped me with that. Their motto is 'Culture is Treatment'."

During his recovery at Round Lake, Lane learned to make the spiritual connections and practices that keep him grounded today, including sweats, smudging and traditional medicines. He also does hunting and gathering.

"Being in nature is healing," says Lane. "It's been a big thing for me. Part of my addiction was needing to fit in and be one of the guys. Now I don't need that. I know who I am. I am part of something – I am part of my land, part of my community, part of my nation, and part of my family. I am not seeking anymore, and a lot of that understanding came through the cultural teachings."

