

Title: Creating a Quality of Life for People with Brain Injuries

Using Neuroplasticity, Mindfulness Mediation, Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction

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Abstract: Ken Collins has lived with his brain injury for over 46 years and has worked with people with brain injuries and other disabilities to live independently since 1983:

<http://www.educationviews.org/ken-collins-reflections-recovery-head-injury/> He is an advocate of developing home and community-based services for people with brain injuries. In 1986-88 he was a VISTA Volunteer and helped develop the first independent living program for people with brain injuries in the U.S. <http://www.sheltercare.org/2016/03/uhlhorn-beginnings/> Ken has participated in indigenous healing practices in the treatment of brain injury (Sweat Lodge, Hogan Ceremonies, NAC) and promotes the use of mindfulness-based stress reduction, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) tapping, Tai Chi, Yoga for successful integration with western medicine to control anger and other consequences stress and anxiety triggers within the limbic system fight or flight response. Ken has conducted national webinars on using mindfulness-based therapies, meditation, exercise, and nutrition to assist in the brain injury recovery process: <http://www.biausa.org/education/altermanwebinars> Ken also organized Elders First! to develop elder day services (adult day care) for frail Navajo elders at senior centers on the Navajo Nation. These efforts were supported by two small grants to the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation and New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability for Elders First! to fund focus groups and develop an Elders First! DVD to help educate chapter officials about elder day services at senior centers <http://youtu.be/Coth5eeZSu0> The DVD was distributed to key legislative leaders in the Navajo Nation, Navajo Area Agency on Aging (NAAA), and Eastern Agency of the NAAA. Ken also played a leadership role in the passage of the Vulnerable Adult Protection Act "Doris Act" on the Navajo Nation. This legislation was passed by the Navajo Tribal Council on January 24, 2012, and was signed into law in February 2012 by Navajo Nation President, Ben Shelly. Most recently, Ken was elected Chair of the New Mexico State-wide Independent Living Council (NMSILC) and is currently runs the Next Step Program at Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services (RMCHCS) Behavioral Health Services Treatment Center in Gallup, New Mexico.