

CHRIS YELLOWBIRD

TURNING YOUR LIFE AROUND

Chris Yellowbird is from Alexander First Nation and his background story is a recollection of trauma, abuse, and misuse. Yellowbird shares, "I have an interesting story, because I used to be a client at the Footprints Healing Centre in Alexander First Nation. I am about 21 months sober now [at time of writing]. After I finished there as a client, an opportunity opened up and I asked for a job. I started as night staff. I just knew I had to start somewhere; it was a way for me to get my foot in the door." While working at the healing centre, Yellowbird started looking into accredited training. He researched his educational options and landed on the Addictions Counselling Diploma program.

Yellowbird worked as a casual support worker for Footprints while completing the Addictions Counselling Diploma program as a full-time, home-based student. Yellowbird was able to do his courses online through the blended delivery methods of NLC Anytime, Anywhere and NLC Live Online™.



Yellowbird has chosen to use his past as a tool to help others on their journey to recovery. Recently, Yellowbird had the opportunity to work as a full-time facilitator for four weeks. "That was a great experience for me. I got to use my instincts because many of my strengths in this field stem from my own personal experiences, but I was able to combine it with the knowledge I learned from my educational experiences."

The program can be taken full-time or part-time and offers a high ratio of student-to-instructor time. Graduates of the program have the skills to provide counselling to

individuals, groups, and families. Yellowbird's advice to others, "If you're getting into the addictions field, always remind yourself of what sparked that passion to be in this field. Don't be complacent and make sure you take care of yourself, too. The instructors at Northern Lakes College have a way of keeping you engaged and witnessing their passion ignites that in yourself."

"To come where I came from, to be a student with NLC today, to feel accepted, and to be encouraged in my educational journey is something I am still getting used to. It is a good feeling, and it is a real motivator for me," he says. Today, Yellowbird is a counsellor and lives on an acreage with his wife and three children.