



“Centering Indigenous Youth Perspectives in Mental Health Advocacy and Action.”

New Mexico Indigenous Youth Council
&
Honoring Native Life

September 29, 2022



INTRODUCTIONS



- Alysia Coriz, Kewa Pueblo
- Chenoa Scippio, Santa Clara Pueblo/Navajo
- Mathis Quintana, Jicarilla Apache Nation
- Kalee Salazar, Taos Pueblo/Santa Ana Pueblo
- Teresa Gomez, Isleta Pueblo
- Jennifer Nanez, Acoma Pueblo

NM Indigenous Youth Council



January 2021

The IAD held two virtual listening sessions with Indigenous youth.

Youth desired more mental health resources and to share and celebrate their culture and language with other Indigenous youth.

IYC webpage and social media account developed.



**Spring 2021
Spring 2022**

The IAD establishes the inaugural Indigenous Youth Council.

The IYC partners with IAD and Honoring Native Life to plan the virtual Indigenous youth wellness summit.

2022 – The IYC expands membership by 16 new members



**June 2021
June 2022**

2021 – The IYC convenes 50 Indigenous youth aged 16-25 years old at the Indigenous Youth Wellness Summit “Community Resilience: Nurturing & Protecting Youth Wellness”

2022 - The IYC hosts the first in-person Summit convening 60 youth at the 2nd Annual Indigenous Youth Wellness Summit “Being A Good Relative”



**August 2021
Fall 2022**

The IYC drafts report with guidance from HNL partners.

IYC presents the final report and recommendations to state and tribal leadership at the 2021 State-Tribal Leader Summit.

2022 – Post Summit, IYC expands on 2021 report by providing tangible examples of how to make report recommendations a reality.

Indian Affairs Department & Honoring Native Life Partnership



- The Indigenous Youth Council (IYC) is housed by the State of New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD)
- IAD and HNL partnered 2021 – 2022 for suicide prevention initiatives:
 - Suicide prevention & intervention trainings in Tribal Communities
 - Develop resource reports for mental and behavioral health resources and strategic plan for how to address suicide for Native American/Alaska Natives
 - Co-host the Youth Wellness Summit with input from the IYC
 - Summit organized by HNL in the Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) model, a culture-based planning process when community members gather to address community-identified issues.

HONORING NATIVE LIFE

NM Clearinghouse for Native American Suicide Prevention

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Honoring Native Life
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HONORING NATIVE LIFE

Background on Creation of Clearinghouse

- Clearinghouse was legislatively created after several youth suicide clusters occurred in NM Tribal communities in 2009/2010.
- Recognition that while NM's 22 tribes are unique in their cultures and communities, there might be some benefit to create a central site to provide suicide prevention and post-vention information, data, training and other support.
- At the time of the second cluster, a statewide workgroup was initiated between the Tribes, the UNM Center for Rural and Community Behavioral Health (CRCBH), The State of New Mexico's Indian Affairs Department (IAD) and The NM Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (BHPC), and the Indian Health Service (IHS) to begin coordination of information and support statewide.



Honoring Native Life Mission

- Honoring Native Life is a multidisciplinary team of UNM faculty and staff with Native American behavioral health and organizational expertise, and deep cultural connections to our Tribal communities as American Indian professionals in the field.
- The mission of the project is to provide a centrally based resource and support to improve health and wellbeing among Native American populations in order to achieve our overall aim of suicide reduction through capacity building, community-based program support, and youth engagement.
- Our approach is to conduct all activities in consultation and in partnership with communities and agencies serving Native American populations throughout New Mexico.
- HNL has developed *direct* relationships with each of the 23 Tribal nations and their health and wellness programs that encompass behavioral health and continues to increase outreach and direct community support.
- HNL also works to leverage clinical experience and knowledge within the Department to support and provide guidance to Tribes to reduce suicide and suicide risk.



New Mexico Suicide Facts

- NM has the 4th highest suicide age-adjusted rates for suicide in the nation
- The American Indian population historically has had the highest rates of suicide per 100,000 population in NM consistently over the last 10 years or more
- Suicide rates for the period 2011 to 2020 indicate a 58% increase for American Indians
- American Indian ages 25-34 have the highest suicide rates

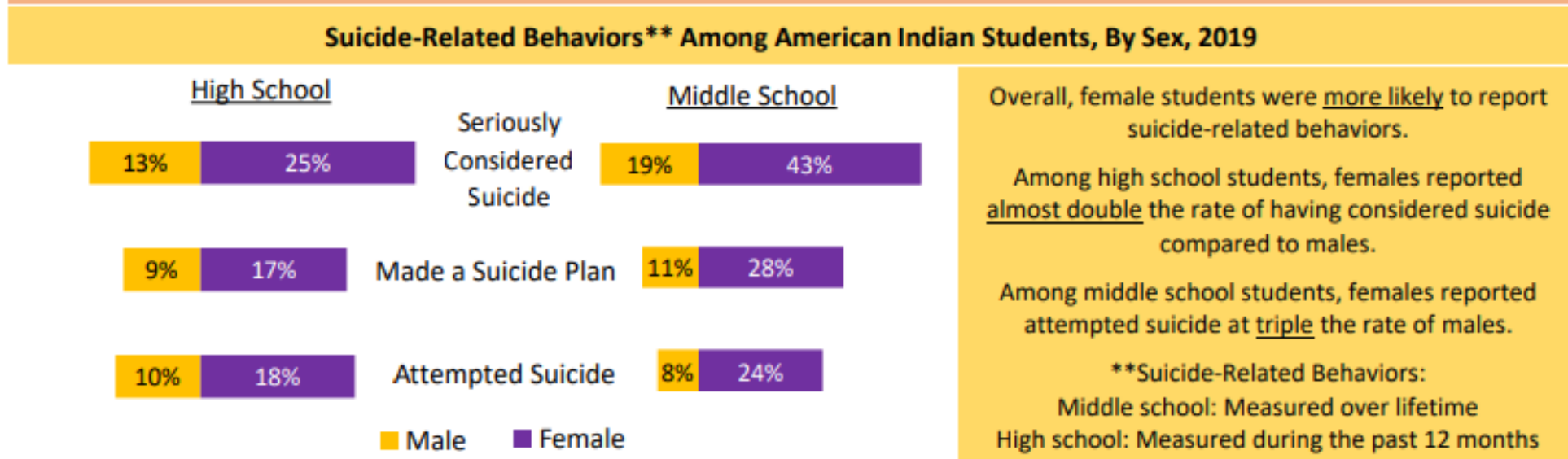
Source: New Mexico Department of Health 2022 Suicide Fact Sheet



The New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey (NM-YRRS) is a classroom-based survey used to assess health risks and protective factors among NM high school and middle school students.

Source: Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center; 2019 NMYRRS Suicide Factsheet.

- Since 2015, attempted suicide has remained higher among AI students compared to NM students overall.
- Between 2013 and 2019, attempted suicide among AI middle school students increased from 9% to 15%
- Between 2013 and 2019, attempted suicide among AI high school students remained relative the same with an increase of 13% to 14%

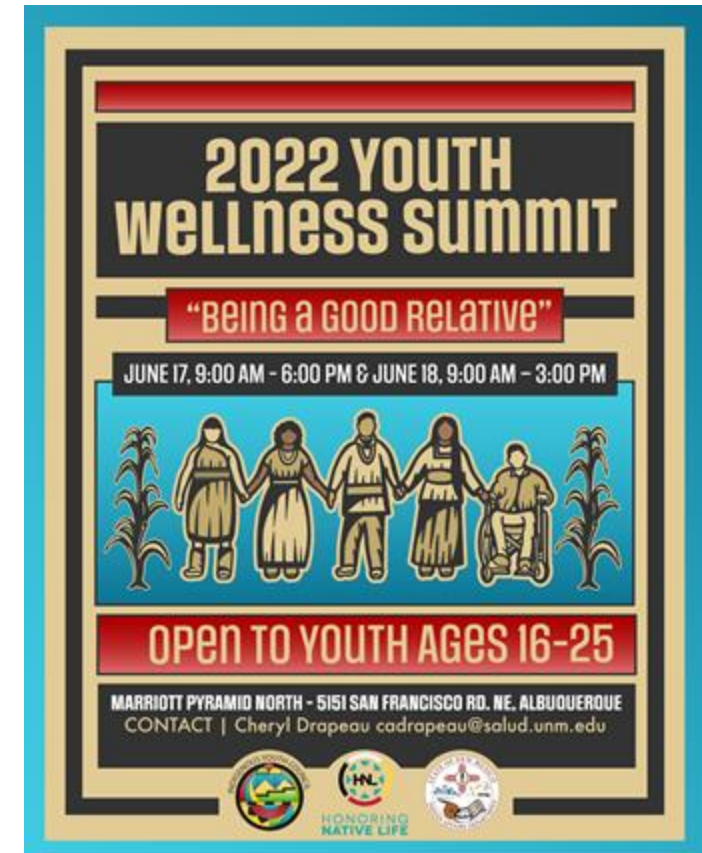


BACKGROUND

INDIGENOUS YOUTH WELLNESS SUMMIT

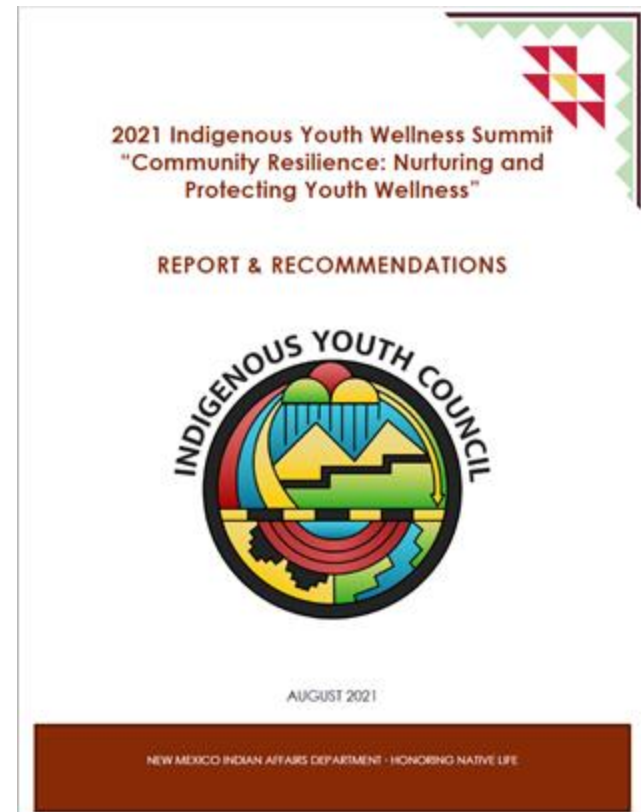


- HNL and IYC have planning meetings to garner ideas from youth about the theme and agenda.
- Plenary sessions addressed holistic wellness through mental health resilience and skill-building, which included presentations on art therapy, physical movement, healthy relationships and boundaries.
- Breakout sessions conducted gather participant feedback.
- The IYC utilized this feedback to develop list of recommendations geared to better support Indigenous youth to improve their holistic wellness.



SUMMIT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Organized into four priority areas grouped under the holistic view of health and well-being (e.g. physical being; mental being; social & emotional being; and spiritual & cultural being) and two other priority areas.
- Organized into target timelines:
 - Short-term (Less than 2 years)
 - Mid-term (2-5 years)
 - Long-term (More than 5 years)
- For complete list, please see:
[*IYC Report & Recommendations.*](#)



PHYSICAL BEING

”To promote movement and physical health.”

Short-term (> 2 years)

- To provide regular education and outreach on interactive movement, such as walking and hiking clubs, yoga, etc. at tribal wellness centers.

Mid-term (2-5 years)

- To invest in tribal seed-sharing programs, communal gardens, plant nurseries, fields, and especially tribal wellness centers and spaces that encourage holistic wellness.

Long-term (5+ years)

- To further protect and defend Indigenous peoples’ religious freedoms and access to sacred sites and natural and cultural resources.
- To allocate land and water to tribes outside tribal areas, especially protecting water from contamination.

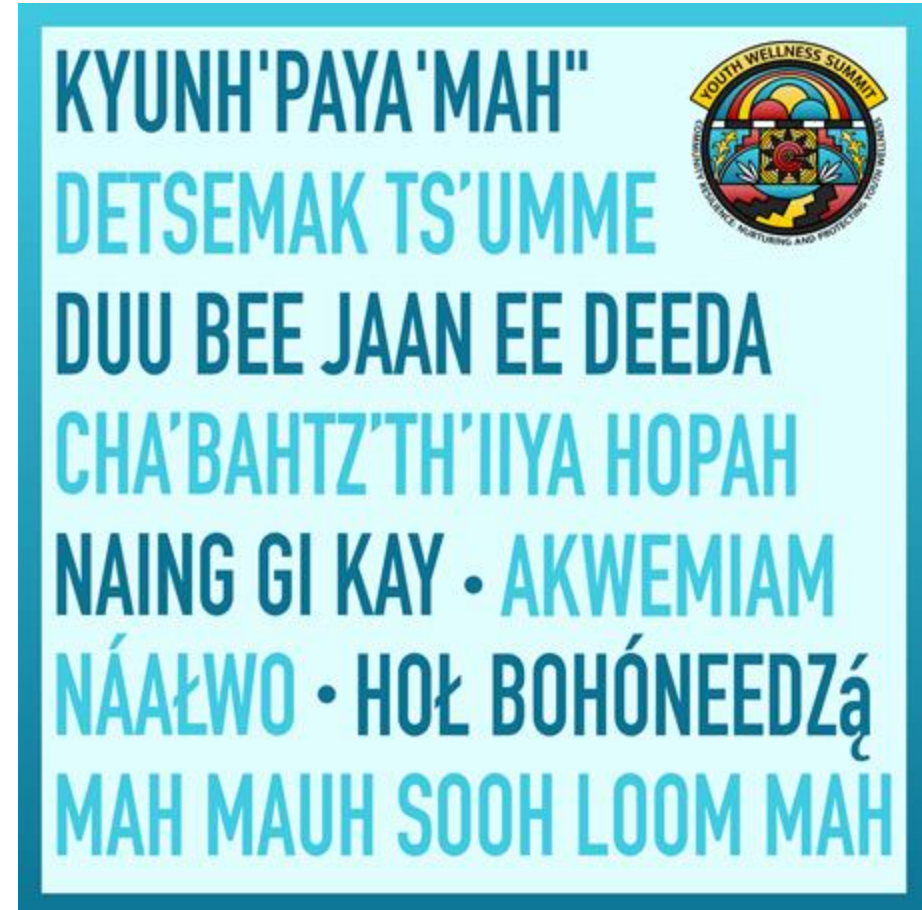


Image translations of “resiliency” or “to be strong”

MENTAL BEING

“To nurture mental health through self-care strategies.”



Image translations of “resiliency” or “to be strong”

Short-term (> 2 years)

- To promote and fund Indigenous youth and elder-talking circles, community wellness events, and health and fitness challenges.
- To transform physical education classes in public schools to classes that integrate holistic wellness approaches with an emphasis on mental health.

Mid-term (2-5 years)

- To fund the construction and/or maintenance of adequate tribal community facilities for community behavioral health programs, nutrition programs, and community centers.

Long-term (5+ years)

- To educate and normalize the concept of self-care and self-care strategies in and outside tribal communities.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL BEING

”To increase understanding about healthy relationships, healthy boundaries, and strengthening self-confidence.”

Short-term (> 2 years)

- To provide elder mentorship opportunities for Indigenous youth, young adults aged 25-30+, and those living in urban centers.
- To encourage access to workshops and training on the prevention of alcohol and substance misuse.

Mid-term (2-5 years)

- To fund and conduct educational programming for youth on healthy relationships in tribal and urban Native communities.
- To invest in pre-professional and educational opportunities in behavioral health to increase Indigenous workforce.

Long-term (5+ years)

- To provide access to behavioral health services and resources to Indigenous youth on and off the reservation.
- To fund training and educational initiatives for state and tribal leadership on healthy relationships to address systemic gender discrimination stemming from colonization.

SPIRITUAL & CULTURAL BEING

”To grow and invest in activities that support cultural revitalization, cultural grounding, and traditional healing.”



Short-term (> 2 years)

- To advocate for a statewide multiagency proclamation supporting Indigenous language revitalization in New Mexico.
- To recognize all Indigenous languages of the 23 Nations, tribes, and Pueblos as the first languages of New Mexico.
- To provide an annual Indigenous culture week (e.g., Native Language Day, Indigenous Peoples’ Day, statewide Day of Prayer, etcetera).
- To implement a land acknowledgement standard for New Mexico, including an intertribal land acknowledgement for major cities in the state.
- 2022 New Mexico Indigenous Languages Month (November)

SPIRITUAL & CULTURAL BEING

”To grow and invest in activities that support cultural revitalization, cultural grounding, and traditional healing.”



Mid-term (2-5 years)

- To invest in the revitalization and preservation of Indigenous languages in ways that respect and promote tribal data sovereignty.
- To ensure that all state employees tasked with the care of public lands that contain tribal cultural sites are adequately educated on tribal nations’ ties to and continued access to these lands.

Long-term (5+ years)

- To fund, educate staff, and support technology and infrastructure of tribal libraries and the development of language revitalization programs.
- To advocate for digital preservation and protection of data at the tribal level, developing tribal-informed archive systems.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

“To integrate lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on tribal communities.”



Short-term (> 2 years)

- To support a tribal convocation to review lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic, discuss emergency management planning, celebrate the return to traditional practices and communal gatherings, and provide a space for Indigenous youth perspectives on how to build back better.

Mid-term (2-5 years)

- To develop Native-specific hotlines and warmlines for mental health crisis response.
- To provide technical assistance to tribes on the use of social media as a means of information sharing during emergency response.

Long-term (5+ years)

- To support the continued development of emergency communication systems and crisis response planning for tribal communities.



YOUTH PRIORITIES

”To elevate Indigenous youth voices and representation in critical decision-making.”

- **MEANINGFUL TRIBAL CONSULTATION**
Consultation operates as an enhanced form of communication that emphasizes trust and respect and a Tribe’s sovereign status on projects that will affect a tribal community.
- **LANDBACK MOVEMENT**
#Landback campaign, which is an Indigenous rights movement encouraging the return of land and resources to Indigenous stewardship.
- **SACRED SITES & WELLBEING**
Sacred sites protection ties to free expression of Native religion and are not always within tribal boundaries. Many sacred places hold meaning for multiple tribes.
- **COMMUNITY PLANNING FOR INTERGENERATIONAL USE**



CONCLUSION

- The IYC hopes that the Summit's recommendations will
 - Serve as a catalyst in making instrumental change for Indigenous youth and their holistic wellness.
 - Reach state and tribal leadership and organizations such as ULI from a sincere place of wanting to contribute to the well-being of our communities and tribal members.
- The IYC asks for hope and trust in the vision that we have laid throughout these priorities and recommendations.



THANK YOU!

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 [@nmidigenousyouthcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/nmidigenousyouthcouncil)