

# Methamphetamine in Indian Country

## Small Group Report

On May 10, 2007, United American Indian Involvement, Inc. held a conference titled “Methamphetamine in Indian Country” in Sacramento, CA. The purpose of the conference was to provide an educational and networking session on methamphetamine abuse and treatment. The conference was comprised of two components. The first component was a didactic training led by Dr. Dale Walker, a physician who specializes in methamphetamine addiction among American Indians and Alaskan Natives, and Mr. Steven Juneau, a former FBI agent who specializes in training law enforcement officers about methamphetamine related issues. The second component of the conference was a facilitated small group discussion designed to have participants identify challenges and discuss steps to implement solutions to these problem areas.

The participants were separated into seven small groups and were asked to discuss and identify several challenges in combating methamphetamine. Many of the groups identified similar challenges including, but not limited to, strengthening cultural identity, increased access to quality treatment and addressing cultural needs in treatment, combating stigma associated with methamphetamine, increasing awareness and prevention education about methamphetamine for youth, parents and adults, and working collaboratively in tribal and urban settings.

The participants in each group were also asked to address solutions in response to the challenges they identified. Several of the groups were able to identify increased access to services, integration of spirituality into treatment, forming collaborations/MOUs with law enforcement and other agencies within the community, and increased support from tribal council/government.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF SOLUTIONS**

1. Set up strategic meetings with different agency’s (i.e., law enforcement, social service programs, and tribal council’s) to discuss collaborative efforts, such as MOU contracts and take necessary steps to implement them.
2. Educate the community that methamphetamine addiction is not an individual or family disease but a disease detrimental to the Indian community as a whole.
3. Locate and utilize available resources for treatment of methamphetamine addiction and increase efforts to address American Indian/Alaskan Native culture& spirituality in treatment and treatment planning.

The following is a word for word account of the challenges and solutions facing our community as distinguished by each group:

**Group 1**

- Incarceration
  
- Housing
  - Social support
  - Services
  
- Family breakup
  - Children in foster care
  - Stigma
  - Behavioral/mental health issues
  - Parenting
  
- Denial/shame
  
- Legal issues
  
- School
  - Truancy
  - Stigma
  - Performance
  
- Spiritual health
  
- Physical health
  - Dental
  - STD (Hepatitis C/HIV)
  
- Health system
  - ER/Hospital
  - Screening
  
- Addiction
  - Lack of access to treatment

## Group 2

- Family
  - Youth concerns – schools
  - Lack of treatment centers for Native youth
  - Need for after-care with family
  - ICWA ~ tribe responsibility
  - Schools – “safe place”
  
- HIV/AIDS - education
  - Gay/Bi stigma
  - Women infected
  - Co-infection – STDs
  - Utilize native law enforcement officers/representatives (Ex. Olin Jones – CA)
  - Establish policy for state
  
- Treatment
  - Harm reduction
  - Long term treatment
  - More Native treatment centers
  - Incentives for treatment (for example: per capita payments)
  - Mentors – support
  - Sustainability of programs
  
- Reservation
  - Restorative justice
  - Need tribal police
  - Jurisdiction issues
  - County collaboration
  - Stereotypes/reluctance – casino
  - Provide research (ex: Sonoma city #1 meth)
  - Funding
  - Re-entry
  - Involve tribal council/government
  
- Urban
  - Appropriate services
  - Lack of native professionals
  - Funding
  - Inter-tribal perspective
  - Cultural competency
  - Provide trainings
  - Re-entry
  - Elder knowledge

### **Group 3**

#### Challenges

- To regain wellness
- Code of silence
- Emotional & spiritual soul wounds

#### Solutions

- Community buy-in
- Cross-training & interacting
- Education & prevention for our children
- Indian chartered schools

### **Group 4**

#### Challenges

- Education
  - Teach practical skills, as in financial management
  - Include culture & spirituality
  - Educate parents
  - Educate tribal leaders
  - Improve education for children
  - About drugs/alcohol
- Economic/Financial
  - Creating jobs
  - Better education for children
  - Address poverty
- Fed / State Government
  - Create incentives for professionals to go to underserved areas
- Strengthening Cultural Identity
  - Teach respect for tribal/cultural events/ceremonies
  - Identify Native wisdom
  - Build on strengths of community
  - Strengthening spirituality
- Tribal Government
  - More involvement of tribal government
  - Must be sober!

## **Group 4 (continued)**

### Solutions

- Programs
  - Based on needs assessment
  - Integrate spirituality
  - Anger management
  - Empower individuals
  - Strong support for recovering addicts
  - Better outreach
  - Increase access to quality, culturally –sensitive programs
  - Reduce stigma related to seeking help
  
- Coalition-building
  - MOUs with law enforcement
  - Collaboration/communication between different agencies, disciplines, organizations
  
- Other Considerations
  - Needs Assessment of community
  - MOUs w/law enforcement
  - Community discussions about social problems
  - Developing community support
  - Integrating spirituality, cultural traditions
  - Collaboration/communication between different agencies, organizations, disciplines
  - Educating children and parents about mental health, drugs, parenting, etc.
  - Build on the community's strengths – empower individuals
  - Address anger-management
  - Better schools/education for children
  - How to address poverty? (financial & spiritual)
  - Strengthen culture identity
  - Strong support for recovering addicts
  - Access to programs
  - More involvement on the tribal council's part (all council members must be sober!)
  - Developing curriculum in schools
  - Address culture, spirituality
  - Financial management

## **Group 5**

### Challenges

- Identify tribal needs/rural urban on & off reservations
- Development of MOU's native entities – community [county-state recognition]
- Identifying Native individuals

### Solutions

- Interventions
- Education
- Family healing
- Finding funding sources
- Getting tribal counsel involved

## **Group 6**

### Challenges

- Lack of parenting in home
  - Incarceration
  - Drug use / alcohol
  - Continued cycle
  - No or little parenting skills
  - Domestic violence
  - “Latch key” kids
  - Divorce/family separation
  - Deaths
- On-going drug addiction
  - Intergenerational
  - Babies born addicted
  - Social services
  - High rates of accident-related injuries
- Lack of empathy
- Elders authority figures
- Proximity of services
  - Location
  - Types of services available
  - Lack of staff/volunteers
  - Funding
  - On-going training

## **Group 6 (continued)**

### Solutions

- Forming Inter-tribal Relationships
  - Courts
  - Medical providers
  - Social services
  - Law enforcement
  - Schools, etc.
  
- Educate Community
  - Volunteer programs
  - OTHER service providers
  
- Advocates
  - Creating tailored case plans
  
- Create Incentives
  - Vouchers for attendance at events / participations
  
- Restoring Traditions
  - Activities
  - Provide teachers
  
- Assessment in Communities
  - Commitment to services/show up
  
- Create Networks of Providers
  - Look at ways to alleviate “burnout”
  - Traditional
  - Self first
  
- Continued Care / Follow Up

## **Group 7**

- Develop wrap-around services approach between agencies
  - Tan-f
  - Probation / law enforcement
  - Family services
  - I.H.S. (H.I.S)
  - After school programs
  - Mental health
  - Public health/medical
  - Tribal governments
  - Traditional healers

### **Group 7 (continued)**

- Build Trust /Relationship w/other N.A. agencies (i.e. tribal gov., law enforcement)
- Educate inside & outside agencies on strengths & special needs of native peoples traditions
- Strengthening American Indian Families.....(develop positive and health families, relationships, couples, and marriages)
- Strengthen A.I. communities in urban/rural places/areas
- Marketing (i.e. outreach awareness to A.I. organizations)
  - Develop a directory of A.I. professionals
- Culturally competent services – not imposed from outside
- Data Sharing
  - RPMS/State
  - Tribal/urban
  - Funding /medical
- Education – on all aspects (physical, mental, emotional, related experiences)
  - Elders
  - Adults
  - Children
- Traditional Values
  - Classes
  - Ceremonies
  - Gatherings, etc.
- Medical
  - Patient education
  - Provider training / referrals/screening
  - School staff training
- Spiritual
  - School
  - Advisors / leaders
- Role Models / Mentors
  - For parents and youth
- Collaboration / Partnership with law enforcement