

# Culturally-based prevention: Eight years of knowing from the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Board of Health Honor Your Life Suicide Prevention Program

Northern Cheyenne Tribal Board of Health

Desiree Restad, MPH

Allyson Kelley, DrPH



# Workshop Overview

- Northern Cheyenne community context
- Call for prevention and intervention activities that include cultural values and traditions
- Traditional beliefs about suicide
- Examples of community based interventions over an 8-year period
- Video and handouts
- Sharing of resources, ideas, and templates developed
- Recommendations for tribally-based suicide prevention programs
- Next Steps

# Learning Objectives

- Participants will list three benefits of culturally based prevention unique to American Indian reservation youth.
- Participants will articulate the use of strength based measures to assess the impact of culturally-based interventions (talking circles, healing camps, American Indian Life Skills)
- Participants will discuss how the culturally-based prevention experiences highlighted in this presentation relate to suicide prevention in their communities.

# Northern Cheyenne Reservation



Lambe Deer Montana Largest Community on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation

# Honor Your Life Outcome Goals

- Increase early screening 10% among youth ages 10-24
- All youth, including LGBTQ youth, military families and veterans on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation will accept services provided through this project 50% of the time.
- Decrease substance abuse by 10% in at risk youth

# What is Culturally Based Prevention

## Icebreaker activity



Use whiteboards and markers. Ask for one person to write, other to speak out to group. Ask the group to define what culturally based prevention is. Ask another group to write how their tribe/community defines suicide. Ask another group to write examples of protective factors. Ask another group to write about risk factors. Pass each sheet to each group so that they can add to definitions/discussion. Report back to the larger group.

# The voice of Elders



Elsie Wick, Northern Cheyenne Elder

# Leadership



# Healing from Grief with Art



Alaina Buffalo Spirit, Northern Cheyenne Elder and Artist

# Traditional Beliefs

## Group Activity 1

- How are the traditional beliefs similar to or different than your tribes beliefs about suicide?
- In what ways do these beliefs support suicide prevention programs and interventions?
  - Challenges? Strengths? Stories from your community?

# Examples of Community Based Prevention

- Cultural camps (4)
- Talking circles (24)
- American Indian Life Skills for high school youth (1)
- Spiritual healing runs (4)
- Elder stories and teachings (5)
- Native HOPE/Good Road of Life (4)
- Skill building opportunities for program staff, counselors, and community members.

# Cultural Camps



Bear Butte, SD Camp 2014

# Talking Circles



Contracted with community facilitators

Hosted at schools, tribal health building, jails, Boys and Girls Club, and youth detention center

Filled gap at schools where counselors were not hired for the school year.

Some facilitators overwhelmed with compassion fatigue, recommend training on this before start of circles and lots of self-care along with group support from Tribal Health.

Handout- TC protocol developed by Elder Elsie Wick

# American Indian Life Skills



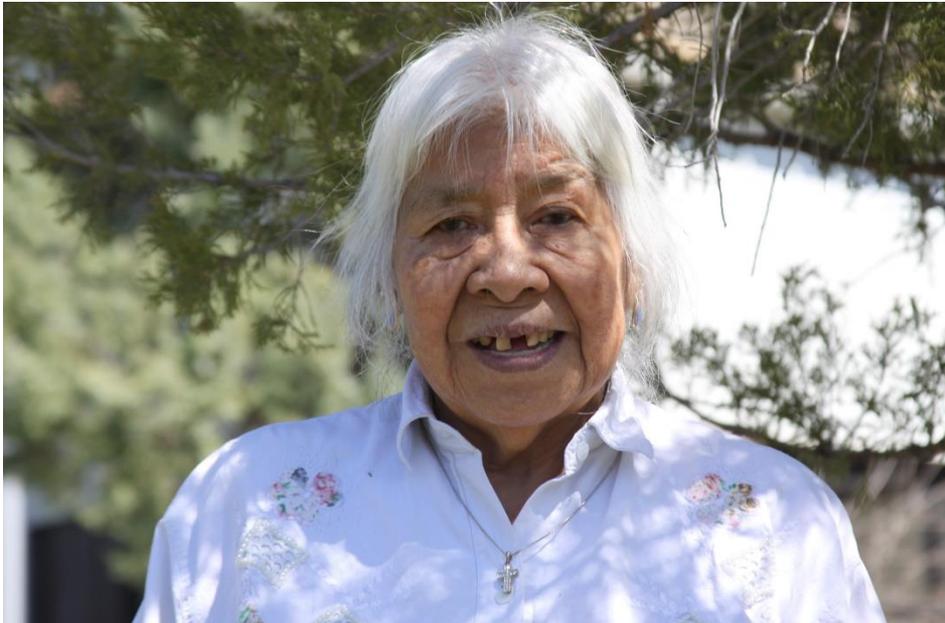
Ruben Littlehead (right), AILS Instructor Lame Deer High School 2016

# Spiritual Healing Runs



Fort Robinson Run January 2016

# Elder Stories



# Native Hope Good Road of Life



Led by Dr. Clayton Small 2013-2016

# Staff Development

- Grief Certification
- ASIST Certification
- QPR Certification
- Excel/Data training
- School
- First Responder training/retreat
- Traditional teachings/practices



# Video

Looking back on eight years of knowing..

# Recommendations

Plan with the end in mind.

Be flexible and accept different ways of knowing.

Cross train staff for unexpected vacancies.

Spend down money as planned.

Communicate often with project officers, even if you feel intimidated.

Revise, reflect, move forward.

Keep doing the work. Culture matters. People matter.

# Activity 2

Answer these questions:

What did you hear?

What did you see?

How did you feel?

What will you do with this information?

# Sharing

- Lessons Learned paper
- Community Survey
- Sources of Strength paper and instrument
- Talking circle protocols
- Elder stories
- Cheyenne views on Suicide
- Story Science

# Contact Information

Desiree Restad, MPH  
Director of Health Promotion Programs  
Northern Cheyenne Tribal Board of Health  
PO Box 67  
Lame Deer, MT 59043

[Desiree.Restad@ihs.gov](mailto:Desiree.Restad@ihs.gov)

[406.477.4945](tel:406.477.4945)

[406.477.6316](tel:406.477.6316) fax