

TRIBAL YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER Newsletter



Indigenizing programs for Native youth

THE TRIBAL YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER PRESENTS:

*Indigenous Ways of Knowing -
Tribal-Based Practices*



IN THIS ISSUE

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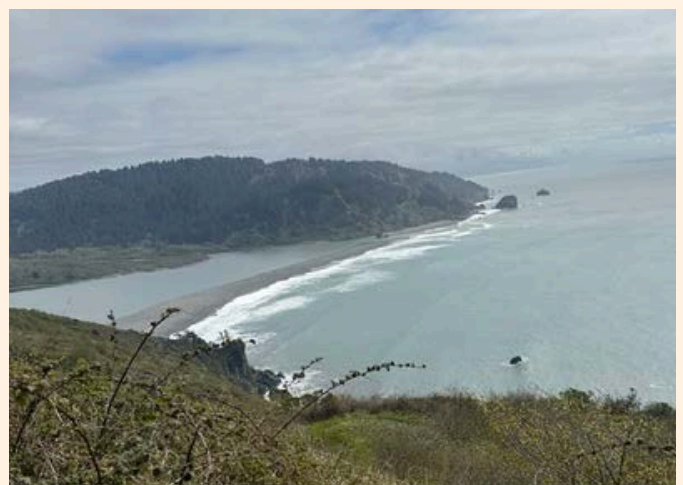
INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING – TRIBAL-BASED PRACTICES



From time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples, Nations, Villages, and Pueblos have been rooted to these sacred lands – our traditional homelands – Turtle Island. These lands, waters, and ways of being continue to nurture and sustain Indigenous peoples and provide the way forward.

*We continue to grow from,
We continue to learn from,
We continue to honor,
We continue to learn from
All living elements of grandmother earth
from the eastern shores – to the southern
shores – to the western shores – to the
land renamed Canada.*

The Tribal Youth Resource Center salutes and honors the wisdom keepers, the youth, the advocates, activists, and those working across NDN country to **create and revitalize** healing ways of being, programs, and services for the children, youth, adults, and for those who have not yet been born.





A LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

April 30, 2024

A Letter to OJJDP Tribal Grantees,

We hope you all are doing well. We are so excited to write this letter to you in the first TYRC newsletter this year. We'd like to be transparent and acknowledge that this has been a season of change. This means many of you have had your grants transfer to new staff due to changes in our staffing. We are hoping to fully staff our team, in particular the Tribal team, with the addition of the Tribal Youth Coordinator that we hope will join us by late Fall. That position, which recently closed, is being hired to provide advice and guidance to resolve, implement, and manage program/policy issues that specifically impact Indian Country. If you have any questions or feedback during this time, we encourage you to reach out to your program manager, Leanetta, or Jazmone, and we are happy to support you.

We also wanted to formally send you a Save the Date for our National Conference taking place November 19, 2024–November 21, 2024. This conference will bring together youth and families, grantees, researchers, practitioners and other stakeholders who are working together to transform juvenile justice. In particular, we are hosting a pre-conference half day for Tribal grantees on November 19th as well as having general sessions specifically directed toward Tribal grantees. We hope that you will join us in community. More information about the conference to be sent soon.

Lastly, but not least, it is the Department of Justice's application season! We have tons of funding opportunities that are available to Tribal grantees that you might be interested in and are eligible for including: Second Chance Act Addressing the Needs of Incarcerated Parents and Their Minor Children, Family-Based Alternative Justice Program, Opioid Affected Youth Initiative, Arts Programs for Justice-Involved Youth, and Mentoring for Youth Affected by Opioid and Other Substance Misuse. For a full list of our open-funding opportunities please [click here](#).

In partnership with you,

Leanetta Jessie, M.S.

Deputy Associate Administrator, Youth Justice and Systems Innovation Division

Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice

Jazmone Wilkerson, Ph.D., J.D., LCPC, NCC

Program Manager, Youth Justice and Systems Innovation Division

Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice

Current OJJDP Youth Justice and Systems Innovation Division's Tribal Grantee Team:

Charles Holloway, Heather McDonald, Rosy Arroyo, Erika Fountain, Chelsea Logan, Jacob Agus-Kleinman, Renee Waite, Christine Ramirez, Jazmone Wilkerson

RESOURCES FROM THE OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION (OJJDP)

The resources below are shared on behalf of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the funder and partner of the Tribal Youth Resource Center. Reach out to your TYRC Training and Technical Assistance Specialist or email TribalYouth@TLPI.org for more information.

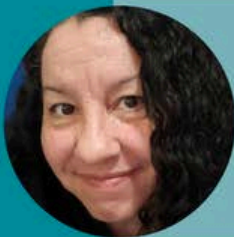
- **Home | Internet for All** – Hi-Speed Internet Program for Everyone
- **Tribal American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters:** Anyone interested in Tribal interpretive services for the deaf community using ASL, please contact HerculesInterpreting@gmail.com and/or <https://dot.cards/amberbraithwaite> (see below for more information about the interpreters and their services).

ASL INTERPRETERS



HERCULES E. GOSS-KUEHN

Hercules E. Goss-Kuehn (Ilocano-Filipino, and Choctaw) is a child of three-generations of Deaf family from Mni Sota and Hawai'i. They are an ASL interpreter that is nationally certified and trained in DV/SA/IPV work across the country and back home on island. They are available for consultation and ASL interpretation at HerculesInterpreting@gmail.com. When Hercules isn't interpreting or facilitating, one can catch Hercules either surfing at the beach or weaving together leaves and flower blossoms into leis.



AMBER BRAITHWAITE

Amber Braithwaite, named Wawokiya Win by her Auntie Paulette, is Hunkpati Dakota from the Crow Creek Dakota Sioux Tribe. She joined the Air Force after high school and in 2004, earned her Associates of Applied Science degree in American Sign Language interpreting. Amber has been a successful ASL interpreter in private practice for 19 years and looks forward to working for the People across Indian country until she retires.

2023 TSASP INSTITUTE | DECEMBER 5-7, 2023 | OKLAHOMA CITY, OK





Nurturing Every Seed

A CONVERSATION ABOUT TRIBAL-BASED PRACTICES WITH CAROLINE M. CRUZ

Caroline M. Cruz, Health and Human Services General Manager for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, understood the importance of learning through observation at a very young age. "My father taught me to start looking at nature and making connections," she shared during an in-depth interview, "[and] started talking beyond nature and about what I now know about connections and the relationships to human development, personalities, by observing people and how it is all connected, like a puzzle or like a circle." Now one of the leading experts in the development and implementation of Tribal-Based Practices (TBP), Caroline credits her upbringing with her foundational understanding of protective factors. "I remember my dad saying, 'there really are no bad seeds,' when we were working in the agriculture fields as children...if you nurtured the various vegetables, fruits and plants, those seeds can become strong and healthy. As we worked the agriculture fields we loved certain areas, because some of the land was gentle and it would yield more produce; in other places, the land was harsh but things would still grow. The dirt was hard and would make our fingers bleed, but it still produced." Caroline remembers her father continued to remind her that it was not the seed or the type of soil that was important; "it's what you do with those seeds that's important," he said. Once the seeds are planted and they start to come from the ground, you can continue to care and to nurture them. He translated that to people and passed that teaching to Caroline.



Photo sourced from the [Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Website](#).

Like babies -- you nurture them, but you need to continue to nurture as they become toddlers, teenagers, adults, and elders.

During her teenage years, Caroline's family moved to the housing projects in Salinas, California. At the age of 19, Caroline was hired by the Monterey County Education Service District as a Community Mobilizer to run a summer Community Housing Project program. In turn, she was able to hire 14 young people between the ages of 14 to 18 living within the projects to create summer activities with a lunch program. Caroline shared that the housing projects had major issues with drug abuse, suicides, homicides, prostitution, truancy, school dropout, delinquency, many living with only one parent, with the majority only having their mothers. She remembers coming home frustrated after a long day and having her dad ask her what was wrong.

Caroline told him that her goal was to wipe out these behavioral problems within the housing projects and the process was too slow. Her dad's response was that that this approach would fail; instead, he encouraged her to try to "create a balance," as these problems had been in existence for hundreds and hundreds of years. To do this, he emphasized that Caroline needed to nurture the youth, guide through examples, observe them, see their strengths, and affirm them. Though she did not understand the science at that time, this way of understanding protective factors has guided Caroline's work ever since.

Continuing to reflect on her childhood in Monterey and Salinas, California, Caroline noted, "I realized somewhere along the way that what seemed to work for other families, other communities, didn't seem to quite fit with our family dynamics." Caroline's mother was a member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and her father was Yaqui from Mexico. Growing up away from the reservation, Caroline noted, had a marked impact on her mother. Caroline shared that her mother left Caroline and her 11 siblings after struggling with boarding school trauma and the death of Caroline's younger sister at 10 months old and began to drink in excess. While Caroline could not understand the complexities as a young child, she now sees that the absence of traditional practices in the burial of her younger sister was her first real glimpse into the harmful effects of stripping away tradition. "My father, coming from Mexico, did not want to violate any of the dominant society rules in terms of burials. Neither parent could do [the burial in] the traditional way. That impacted our family dynamics." Caroline continued, "it wasn't until I

started going up to my mom's reservation that I realized the impact of the lack of traditions...we were pulled apart trying to fit in to the dominant society and not being able to practice traditional ways." Though Caroline was not the oldest child, she took the role of mother guided by her father. Caroline faced more loss at a young age, losing her husband at 20 years of age when she was only 19 herself, and relied heavily on Yaqui ways in order to cope with her grief. "My father and his brother were descendants of medicine people [and] mentored me through...that was my healing process," Caroline shared, emphasizing the effectiveness of Tribal practices in supporting her through her grief.

Early in her career, Caroline's understanding that prevention and intervention strategies that may work with some will not work with others led her to become known as "the adaptor." She said, "[in my time working with a grant with the University of Washington,] I learned that in the academic research world, there's so much opportunity for error because they take out that human factor and we don't all respond the same way." Caroline continued to suggest cultural-based practice as an adaptive, alternative approach to evidence-based practice, bringing an awareness to the ways in which Westernized programming and assessment can be both inaccessible and ineffective in Tribal communities. "When I was working with the Addictions and Mental Health Division with the state of Oregon, we received a grant with the University of Washington from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)." It was through this grant that Caroline was introduced to two researchers with the School of Social Work on risk and protective factors, David Hawkins, PhD and Richard Catelano, PhD. In the early 1980s,

Caroline first learned about risk and protective factors when she taught an alcohol and drug curricula called “Here’s Looking At You,” while working with the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. The youth curriculum focused on teaching skills to make choices along with age-appropriate alcohol and drug education and was based on early research around risk and protective factors, co-developed with Hawkins and Catelano. Caroline had some concerns about the curriculum and did a 3-year evaluation targeting 4th graders and was able to make recommendations for adaptations. “Learning about risk and protective factors,” Caroline recalled, “I began to realize - this is the teaching of my dad,” the importance of nurturing every seed.

In the early 2000s, “evidence-based practice was becoming a buzzword,” but Caroline recognized that the approach was not directly applicable to what communities needed, nor could Tribal communities and other indigenous communities afford those programs and curriculum which required training defined as evidence-based practices. “When you look at what’s kept us [Tribal communities] intact, it’s the practices that came from the Tribe, from our teachers who tended to be our Elders, that have always existed, but that we tucked away [and needed to return to].” In response, Caroline developed what would later become the foundation for a Tribal-based practice approach: the Oregon Prevention Cookbook. Caroline’s cookbook did not have recipes for food, but it did provide nourishment for communities in another way. The “recipes” provided guidance and templates through which communities could adapt the evidence-based practices approach on their own and create something that would truly “feed” their

people. Caroline served on the Oregon steering committee when she worked for the Addictions and Mental Health Division with the state of Oregon for evidence-based practices and learned the structure that was required for a practice to become an evidence-based practice. She relied on this learning, as well as support from Native PhDs, other professionals in the academic field, and funding from SAMSHA, and continued to push the concepts forward. Since then, Caroline has worked alongside numerous state universities, organizations, Tribes, and individuals, and directly with the Department of Human Services Addictions and Mental Health Branch, serving as a Lead Prevention Trainer, Tribal Liaison, Prevention Specialist, Project Officer for grants, and Director of Resource Center for 21 years. Caroline’s many roles over the last five decades have only affirmed and furthered her goal of providing the foundational elements and structure for programs to have their Tribal-based practices recognized both internally and externally as prevention, treatment, and aftercare strategies, that they can implement those approaches that are best for their communities. As a result of these combined efforts, Tribal-Based Practices are now formally recognized and accepted by the State of Oregon.



Photo sourced from the [Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Website](#).

Caroline generously shared some examples of Tribal-Based Practice implementation that she was a part of through her work. In the 1990s, Caroline was a member of the State Fatality Task Force in Oregon. The team had concerns with an increase in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in the state of Oregon. Caroline also noticed that Warm Springs had a high rate of SIDS. Caroline explained, “we had to review the deaths under 18 to note and classify them as “neglect,” “abuse,” or “no findings” It was our task as a State Fatality team to propose prevention strategies if we saw a trend of deaths that could be prevented.” The State Fatality Team did their research and discovered that babies need to be placed on their backs the first year of their lives to reduce SIDS.

“I remember sitting with Warm Springs Prevention program around 1994 and thinking – how come, on our reservation, we no longer practiced making baby boards? With this practice, babies would be placed on their backs, correct?” Caroline shared the research and approved funds for Warm Springs Prevention to include baby board classes as a part of maternal/child health after finding teachers (Elders) who were willing to return to traditional ways. The classes provided parents with not only the basic information about how to put the infant on the board (on his back) for the first year, but also why this was an upheld tradition. As Caroline recalled, “the teacher showed me that when you’re unlacing the baby board, you’re touching the baby, you have eye contact with the baby. And who could not want to start cooing around the baby once he is looking at you?”

The baby board not only provides a mechanism for safety through keeping a baby on his back, preventing him from possible danger, but also serves as a way through which a new parent can connect in meaningful and playful ways with their child. Bonding with one’s baby is important for the child’s growth and mental wellbeing. “We reduced SIDS by returning to the baby board,” Caroline shared, “we did a ten-year study and did a comparison with those who were taught the proper way of putting the baby on the board [and] reduced SIDS to almost zero.”

More recently, during her time working for the Oregon Department of Human Services, Caroline shared the story of a call she received from the finance department asking about expenditures with the Burns Paiute Tribe on drum-making classes. Caroline offered this call as evidence of the challenges that many communities face in implementing Tribal-based practices. “The drum is the outcome; the dynamics to get to that drum is the focus and what you’re not seeing,” Caroline recalled telling the state finance department. She continued, “You’re bringing the teachers from the community, the Elders, to pass on a traditional teaching. The fact that they’re spending time with Elders is allowing them to learn steps, concepts they’ll use in life.” Caroline emphasized the importance of that intergenerational connection and celebration through the program. “It is an intergenerational program, connecting youth with elders, learning respect and connections. The pride of the youth completing the drum is a skill they can develop in life -- to finish things they have started, having a time to bring community together so the youth can perform their songs and playing their drums. This is recognition and creates bonding to their

families and communities [and] these are the teachings they will learn to carry on their traditions with pride. [The] reward stays with them for life, [as they] don't *just* come out with a drum." Caroline explained that it has been important for her to enter academic spaces that value evidence-based practices equipped with the language of "protective factors," "risk factors," "research and evaluation," and the ability to show the relative effectiveness of such Tribal-based, community-oriented, preventative practices as compared to Western interventions.

The return to baby boards as a preventative practice in Warm Springs and implementation of drum making in Burns Paiute were only two of many examples of successful Tribal-based programming that Caroline has helped to implement. The through line in all of these examples is the intentionality behind their *why*. When asked what advice she would give to programs aiming to successfully implement culturally relevant, Tribal-Based practices, Caroline immediately said that communities need to connect to their "*why*." "If [we] can't connect the practice with the '*why*,' it just becomes a practice like anything else and it doesn't make a difference if you're using evidence-based practices or Tribal-based practices." Continuing with the metaphor of feeding one's community, Caroline noted that we need to make sure not to look at Tribal-based practices as a menu, a collection of alternative practices from which we pick and choose. Rather, Caroline offered, "it is a lifestyle, it's a way of balance, it's a way of life, it's a way of teaching, it's a way of turning people back to individual responsibility...by returning to [our] biggest protective factors."

To help Tribal communities in having this return recognized by Western entities that Tribal communities may rely for funding and support, Caroline has dedicated herself to building and sharing templates and adaptable strategies. She hopes that these templates, many of which are included in the pages that follow this article, will serve as tools, a foundation, the basic recipe, through which Tribal communities can build on the sustainable practices that their communities have used for countless generations.



Photo sourced from the [Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Website](#).

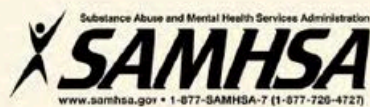
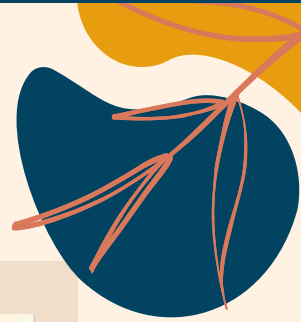
Thank you to Caroline M. Cruz for your time, your willingness to share your story, and your commitment to serving not only your own community, but all Tribal communities who will benefit from your work, passion, and expertise. We are deeply grateful and honored to share these templates on your behalf!

Templates & Tools:

RESOURCE 1: MANY PATHWAYS TO FOLLOW – OVERVIEW HANDOUT

The Many Pathways to Follow handout provides an introduction to and overview of the process and template to record Tribal-Based Practices, including key vocabulary that will support implementation. Full document is 4 pages long.

Click the link above or document below to view the full document!



Many Pathways to Follow *Tribal Best Practices*

Caroline M. Cruz, Associate
SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT)
West Resource Team

In recent years, federal, state and county governments have been embracing the concepts of "evidence-based", "research-based", "science-based" and "best-practices" as requirements for successful funding of awards.

Oregon tribes and tribal communities voiced objections to the movement towards "evidence-based" because it imposes a linear approach to funding requirements that are greatly at odds with the circular worldview held by most American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI-AN) people. Oregon tribes, tribal entities and other academic advisors have met regularly since 2003 to gather information about indigenous practices that have longevity within tribal communities.

As a result, practices were documented and a format was created to bridge the gap between the scientific definition and tribal best practices.

This handout provides an overview of this process and template to record elements of tribal best practices.

Evidence-Based & the Indian Way

Scientifically-Validated refers to those approaches based upon social science or behavioral science theories (science-based) which were designed for non-Native communities. Some of these have been adapted to meet some of the cultural needs of AI-AN communities. These programs were also evaluated using scientific methods preferred by the accountability systems described in the government resource documents.

Scientifically-Replicated refers to those science-based programs that have been implemented more than one time in Native communities or in non-Native communities.

Culturally-Validated refers to those approaches that are based upon principals, laws, and values of specific AI-AN communities. These historical/traditional "teachings" form the basis for the programs. They are culturally relevant, culturally appropriate, and designed according to the "Indian Way". They have been implemented according to culturally

Behavioral Health is Essential To Health • Prevention Works • Treatment is Effective • People Recover




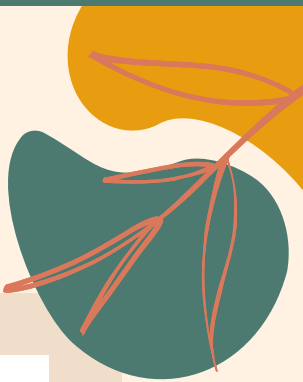
Templates & Tools:


RESOURCE 2: TRIBAL PRACTICE DESCRIPTION APPROVAL FORM TEMPLATE

The Tribal Practice Approval Form Template offers a framework through which to plan implementation of a Tribal Practice in your program.

Full document is 3 pages long.

Click the link above or document below to view the full document!



 **Tribal Practice Approval Form**

**Oregon Addictions & Mental Health Division
Evidence-Based Programs
Tribal Practice Approval Form Template**

1. Name of Tribal Practice

2. Brief Description

3. Other Examples of This Tribal Practice

4. Evidence Basis for Validity of the Tribal Practice: Historical/Cultural Connections

Longevity of the Practice in Indian Country	❖
Teachings on which Practice is based	❖
Values incorporated in Practice	❖
Principles incorporated in Practice	❖
Elders' approval of Practice	❖
Community feedback/evaluation of Practice	❖

5. Goal Addressed by This Tribal Practice

6. Target Populations

a. Institute of Medicine Strategy (check off one of the following four)

<input type="checkbox"/> "Universal"
<input type="checkbox"/> "Selective"
<input type="checkbox"/> "Indicated"
<input type="checkbox"/> "Treatment"

Rev: 12 April 2010 Page 1

Templates & Tools:

RESOURCE 3: TRIBAL PRACTICE DESCRIPTION APPROVAL FORM GUIDE

The Tribal Practice Approval Form template guide offers a step-by-step explanation through which to complete the example Tribal Practice Approval form template (Resource 2). Full document is 9 pages long, but page numbers begin with 4, as the document is intended to be read directly after Resource 2.

Click the link above or document below to view the full document!



Oregon Addictions & Mental Health Division Evidence-Based Programs (EBP) Tribal Practice Approval Form

Definitions and Suggestions

- ❖ (Note: Within any box, you may add additional points using your "enter" key; a four-diamond bullet appears to indicate your next point.)

1. Name of the Tribal Practice

This is the name of a (proposed or already) approved Tribal Practice—which makes it cost-reimbursable under an EBP mandate.

The name of the Practice is important. It is very convenient to have the same name reflecting a Tribal Practice which is implemented similarly in many tribes: e.g., Sweat Lodge Ceremony. Among other conveniences, a name that gains credibility lends credibility: e.g., *Project Venture*¹ (a Service Learning program) has "NREPP Best Practice" credibility²; *Canoe Journey*^{3 4} is supported by scientific evidence; as is *American Indian Life Skills*⁵. Horse programs or equine therapy⁶ are well researched. Other published Native American evidence-based Practices can be found on published lists.^{7 8 9 10 11}

However, every implementation is somewhat different—one *Canoe Journey* is not exactly the same as another, even in the same Tribe. Some names have proprietary issues; some have sacredness issues. Without copyright, Federal Drug Administration (FDA), or other protections, there is vulnerability to inappropriate use and exploitation of creditable Tribal Practice names. And some names are applied to some practices which are so different in fundamental ways that they should not use the same name. As names gain credibility, the problem of using names that don't apply gets worse.

¹ Project Venture website.

http://www.npaih.org/images/epicenter_docs/suicide_prevention/2008/Promising%20Strategies%20-%20ProVenture.pdf

² Project Venture listed as a model program. http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/programfulldetails.asp?PROGRAM_ID=146

³ Journeys of the Circle, a ppt presentation on the Canoe Journey. http://www.aap.org/NACH/Marlatt_plenary.pdf

⁴ La Marr J, Marlatt GA. (2007). Canoe Journey Life's Journey: A Life Skills Manual for Native Adolescents. Facilitators Guide with CD-ROM. Hazelden. http://www.hazelden.org/OA_HTML/libeCCTplmDspRte.jsp?item=7580&prddb_prod=vcGMsek5Mw-dESkuf5eyUenw:5&prddb_prod_pses=prddb_prod%3DvcGMsek5Mw-dESkuf5eyUenw%253AS~

⁵ LaFamboise TD. (1995). *American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum*. University of Wisconsin Press.

⁶ Native American and Native Horse Human-Animal Healing Center.

http://www.ispmb.org/index.php?option=com_content&id=49

⁷ Suicide Prevention Resource Center. <http://library.sprc.org/browse.php?catid=31>

⁸ National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices.

<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/listofprograms.asp?textsearch=Search+specific+word+or+phrase&ShowHide=1&Sort=1&T1=1&T2=2&T3=3&T4=4&T5=5&R1=1&R1OPT=3>

⁹ Center for the study and prevention of violence. <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/infohouse/publications.html#blueprintspubs>

¹⁰ Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. http://www2.dsgonline.com/mpg/mpg_search.aspx

¹¹ One Sky Center Native Programs Directory. <http://www.oneskycenter.org/oscservices/programs/dspAdvanceSearch.cfm>



The Healing of the Canoe

The revitalization of our spiritual, cultural, traditional, and language practices and teachings for our Native youth has been high priority for our tribal communities (Tribes, Nations, Villages, Pueblos and Bands). The "Healing of the Canoe" (HOC) program is one of the practices and teachings to reacquaint our Native youth with the understanding of who they are and where they come from -- the water, the land, the elements -- and to honor the warriors of the past and present. The Suquamish Tribe, Port Gamble S'klallam, and the University of Washington Alcohol and Drug Abuse Institute began the journey to revitalize the medicine of the canoe by developing the HOC curriculum, which embodies ancestral teachings of the four seasons.

In 1989, before development of the HOC curriculum, pacific northwest coastal Tribes began revitalization of the Canoe Journey to Seattle, organized by Emmett Oliver (Quinault), an educator, advocate policy maker, and U.S. Coast Guard Officer. This was the first intertribal "Paddle to Seattle" Canoe Journey in 100 years and garnered participation from twenty Tribes, launching from various points across the northwest region. Just over three decades later, over 100 canoe families recently participated in the 2023 Paddle to Muckleshoot landing with over 1,000 individuals greeting the canoe families.

The revitalization of the Canoe Journey has allowed the HOC curriculum to flourish among tribes as far as Alaska down to California, and the practice continues to grow.

**"ONE HEART, ONE MIND
GOES BEYOND THE
CANOE."
-ELDER MUCKLESHOOT
TRIBAL MEMBER**



*Photo (Above): Erika Schultz, The Seattle Times
(Left): Alex Garland, South Seattle Emerald*



This culturally relevant curriculum provides life skills that navigate Native youth away from negative influences, emotions, stress, anxiety, and depression. Instead, youth are engaged in their culture, traditions, and values that assist in preventing substance use and suicide. To date, the impact for Native youth, their families, and their communities has been tremendous. Suquamish Tribe, where the HOC is housed, has served 51 tribes and 21 tribal organizations in adapting and implementing the curriculum. The HOC curriculum's metaphor of the canoe journey, to be focused on the journey of life, offers communities a beautiful example of the potential for impact when Tribal-Based practices are revitalized and reaffirmed.

For more information, please visit <https://healingofthecanoe.org/>, reach out to your TYRC Technical Assistance Specialist, or contact the Tribal Youth Resource Center at TribalYouth@TLPI.org.

Learn More:

Healing of the Canoe Curriculum

Eight Generation: "What is Canoe Journey?"

Smoke Signalz Independent Tribal Media: "Watchlist: 'A History of the Muckleshoot Canoe Journey'"

Cultural Mental Health and Wellness



WITH ETHLEEN IRON CLOUD-TWO DOGS, TYRC TRIBAL YOUTH
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MANAGER

Greetings Relatives!

I'd like to encourage some thinking about our mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, particularly among children and youth. Mental health is often associated with the health of our thinking and attitudes, which leads to expressions of behavior that are healthy, unhealthy, harmful, or self-harmful. The western behavioral health approach is to assess, diagnose, and respond with "treatment" that may involve hospitalization, medication, counseling, and other therapeutic strategies depending on the severity of the need of the individual.

Indigenous approaches to mental health and wellness include addressing the mind, body, emotions, and spirit as inseparable parts of the whole being; that which impacts one part has an effect on all the other parts. For example, it is a Lakota belief that when a child, or any individual for that matter, experiences severe trauma or is even exposed to it, all parts of their self are impacted and without cultural intervention (according to their respective cultural beliefs), the impact can have far reaching and sometime lifelong effects. The wound in the spirit created by the trauma can fester and impact functioning in all areas of their life.

Trauma is also related to the loss of a loved one, particularly if the passing of a loved one was



Pictured Above: Ethleen Iron Cloud-Two Dogs, Tribal Youth Program Training and Technical Assistance Manager

“
**INDIGENOUS
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OTHER PARTS.**
”

sudden or traumatic. When youth suffer a loss, the expectation upon returning to school is that they will resume an academic posture, i.e., be ready to learn and pick up where they left off before the loss. The reality is that grief and loss have great impact, particularly on a child. How can we respond to children who have had a loss in a culturally responsive way?

A cultural response, for example, is the Istamni Wicakicipakinta Pi (Lakota Wiping of Tears ceremony); this has been used to address grief and loss among Lakota people for hundreds of years. This ceremony involves extended family and community members coming together to bring food, prayers, song and encouraging words to the mourners as a way of acknowledging a family's loss of a loved one, providing comfort and encouragement for adjusting to the physical absence of their loved one. This ceremony, when done with love and comfort, helps to transition the child back into school by attending to the child's feelings of loss and giving them comfort space to be among caring staff, teachers, and other students. This has the potential of decreasing the risk of the child disengaging from the academic world and increasing the potential of strengthening the bond among students, teachers, and staff.

In the Lakota worldview, acknowledging the loss, providing "spirit medicine" for the wound created by the loss and making sure the child has support upon returning to school, are features of a Lakota concept termed "lhakta;" which means "to look out for."

Traditionally and historically in the Lakota worldview, no one was left behind; if a warrior fell in battle or in a buffalo hunt, the other warriors carried him home. If someone needed food, shelter or clothing, the other members of the camp "looked out for them" and provided what they could for them. So, when children and youth have mental health wellness needs, consider calling on cultural knowledge holders to help respond so that the child's whole self can be strengthened. Drawing on the strengths of different approaches to address mental health wellbeing is encouraged while having a strong cultural foundation to support the child.

Some questions to consider about cultural mental health in your community:

- What are some cultural beliefs specific to your Tribal Nation and/or Village that are relevant to maintaining wellness as individuals?
- How can we use our respective cultures as the foundation from which to build, restore and strengthen wellness in our communities?



Youth Mental Health First Aid

CULTURALLY GROUNDED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Mental Health First Aid originated in Australia as a community approach to providing care and support for mental health and substance misuse. MHFA teaches people how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. Participants learn skills to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis and connect them to healing support. In 2008, the National Council for Mental Wellbeing brought Mental Health First Aid to the United States. Today, their goal is to train one out of every 15 people in America in MHFA, ensuring that everyone has a close friend they can turn to when experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) courses teach adult learners how to assist fellow adults, while Youth MHFA courses teach adult learners how to assist adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18. These courses benefit teachers, coaches, parents, mentors and any adult who works with youth. In these 7.5-hour courses, participants also learn a 5-step process to intervene and help people access culturally competent, appropriate care. To reflect the diversity of our communities, the National Council has adapted the training to include community specific courses. One of which is the Youth Mental Health First Aid for Tribal Communities and Indigenous People.



Pictured Above: Cortney Yarholar

To ensure fidelity, the YMHA for Indigenous communities does follow a curriculum that reinforces an increase in mental health literacy. The slides, manuals, and materials remain consistent. However, the trainer is encouraged to work with community members to adapt the training to reflect community and cultural strengths. This may include identifying community-specific, formal and informal resources such as natural helpers and cultural knowledge keepers and identifying additional local resources and supports. The community-specific courses also take into account cultural values and understandings specific to the community in which the course is being delivered. A culturally informed trainer will take appropriate steps in preparation with local community advisors to include community specific and culturally strengths, stories and understandings.

The reality is that formal mental health services, although great, may not always be accessible or even a right fit for people in Tribal communities. However, when we can surround our children with caring, responsible adults who have the skills necessary to support a youth experiencing a mental, emotional challenge or crisis, we step closer to fulfilling sacred roles and shared communal values of being good relatives. The goal of these Mental Health First Aid courses is to create a healthy dialogue to support the mental and emotional wellness of our young people and families. Onawana Miller, Citizen of the Quechan Indian Tribe states, "Offering YMHFA for Tribal Communities and Indigenous Peoples is vital in that it recognizes and honors the past, present and future. The course opens the door to the conversation of healing and intervention beyond the parameters of a mainstream perspective."

To learn more about the impact of YMHFA for Tribal Communities and Indigenous Peoples, visit <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2023/10/mental-wellness-empowers-tribal-communities-indigenous-peoples/>

For information about being certified to train YMHFA for Tribal Communities and Indigenous Peoples, visit [Youth MHFA for Tribal Communities and Indigenous Peoples](#).

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OFFERING YMHFA FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IS VITAL IN THAT IT RECOGNIZES AND HONORS THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE. THE COURSE OPENS THE DOOR TO THE CONVERSATION OF HEALING AND INTERVENTION BEYOND THE PARAMETERS OF A MAINSTREAM PERSPECTIVE.
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-- ONAWANA MILLER, CITIZEN OF THE QUECHAN INDIAN TRIBE

The Tribal Youth Resource Center has been working with [Evergreen Training & Development, LLC](#) and with founder Cortney Yarholar, a husband and father of two, enrolled member of the Sac & Fox Nation of Oklahoma, and Pawnee, Otoe & Mvskoke Creek descendant to provide YMHFA training to TYRC staff. Learn more about the trainings offered by Evergreen Training at [MHFA | Evergreen](#) or contact the Tribal Youth Resource Center at TribalYouth@TLPI.org to learn more.



We Are Living Arts

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH EXPRESSION



“ THE CREATOR IS THE ORIGINAL ARTIST WHO CREATED US AS SACRED LIVING ARTS ON THIS EARTH. -GRANDMA ”

As sacred beings, we are connected to who we are when we are creating on this earth, allowing us to be our true, authentic selves. This is the inspiration for the “We Are Living Arts” (WALA) program: to help Native youth be their true, authentic selves with purpose as sacred humans on this earth. Our cultures and cultural values have many ways of expressing themselves in the arts, both traditionally and contemporarily. Telling our tribal stories and passing on teachings through art modalities helps our youth heal, feel connected and able to share their voice, and inspires not only oneself but others.

WALA launched June 2016, serving two Tribal communities: Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR). Since then, the WALA program has expanded to over thirty Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and Native youth organizations, and has developed a partnership with the Tribal Youth Resource Center at the Tribal Law and Policy Institute. This partnership has allowed WALA to create virtual programs with both Tribal

Youth Programs and Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts to explore how arts can contribute to empowering Native youth to find their voice and talents. If you would like to learn more about the WALA program, please contact your assigned training and technical assistance specialist.

What is WALA?

WALA’s mission is to “create, heal and inspire Indigenous and Alaskan Native Youth through positive peer to peer mentoring, cultural integration, and an exploration of the arts.” There are 3 major components: **RISEUP**, **ENVIRONMENT**, and **ART INSPIRED**. **RISEUP** focuses on the individual in the context of group cooperation, alignment, and peer-to-peer voice. Peer youth facilitators who are mentored and trained in youth facilitation lead the youth in small groups, building a sense of belonging and safety in the circle while engaging in topics that are meaningful to youth. **ENVIRONMENT** engages the youth in their surroundings through activities (i.e. hiking, low ropes course, tribal gardens, other experiences in the outdoors with topics that cover indigenous foods, environmental restoration etc.). **ART INSPIRED** encourages youth to explore and express themselves

through the use of a chosen art form: performing arts, visual arts, and literary arts (contemporary and cultural arts). WALA embraces professional Indigenous artist who will inspire and engage the youth in a project that will be shared with their community at the close of the program.

A Community Story

Recently, peer youth facilitators with The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria led small groups in a scavenger hunt through the Redwood Forest to locate plants, animals, and other living beings before they join their artist sessions. The FIGR Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) embraced the 5-day WALA program while collaboratively delivering the Gathering of Native Americans Curriculum. Since WALA has been a part of their prevention summer program, there has been an increase of participation, engagement, and positive youth behavior. Once graduated from FIGR Tribal TANF programming, youth return as WALA youth facilitator(s) or as a Tribal TANF youth worker(s). Dante Martinez, an enrolled member of the FIGR was one of the first youth participants.

“Tuumiš my name is Dante Martinez I have been a part of the Graton youth programs since I was young and have been a youth facilitator for 7 years. These camps have helped me get in touch with my Native culture by organizing cultural activities, inviting Native elders or community members to share their knowledge, and incorporating traditional teachings into the programs. The WALA program has helped me understand how rich our native culture and traditions are. These teachings have inspired me and shaped my perspective on life and



Pictured Above: Dante Martinez

ultimately motivated me to become a youth facilitator and give back to the community which has given so much to me. I’ve learned that by respecting and honoring our culture, we can empower each other strengthening our community to embrace our roots and build a strong sense of belonging.” Dante now attends Santa Rosa Junior College with a major in Kinesiology. When not in classes, he continues to serve his communities. In addition to role as a peer youth facilitator in this context, Dante is now also a youth facilitator in leadership at a national level with Jeri Brunoe Training & Consulting.

Building Belonging through Art

According to the American Psychiatry Association, creative arts enhance mental health and well-being. Many health care and mental wellness organizations are increasing their research specific to the arts and creativity, as a result of the clear, positive impact it on patients, elderly, children and youth.

The research shows that art intervention improves mood, helps isolated teens, and supports the health and quality of life for patients with dementia. In the context of Native life, the value of creativity using the arts goes back millennia with our Native Tribes, Nations, Villages, Pueblos in telling our stories orally, through petroglyphs, basketry, tools, songs, music, ceremony and more! The idea that when we are creating, we are connecting to Creator in a humble beautiful way is a Tribal-based practice that continues to result in increased protective factors, meaningful connection, communal growth.

WALA serves as a prevention program that instills life skills, social skills, coping skills, and cultural leadership skills through affirming the importance creativity and engagement for our Native youth, encouraging embracing of culture, belonging, and healing for all who participate.

If you would like more information about We Are Living Arts, please visit our website at www.WeAreLivingArts.com or contact the Tribal Youth Resource Center at TribalYouth@TLPI.org



All photos provided by Jeri Brunoe with permission to share.

Sources

American Psychiatry Association,
<https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/creative-arts-enhancing-mental-health>

National Library of Health,
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8397377/>



Celebrating Community Accomplishments

TULE RIVER JUVENILE HEALING TO WELLNESS COURT



Congratulations to the first two graduates of the Tule River Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court (one pictured)!

The Tule River Juvenile Healing to Wellness Court “acknowledges the commitment, dedication, and perseverance, demonstrated by [participants] in embracing the principles of healing, growth, and positive change.”

The TYRC honors you and your achievements, as well as the work of the Tule River JHWC team.

If you'd like to submit photos, stories, or recommendations for a Celebrating Community Accomplishments page in a future TYRC Quarterly Newsletter, please email us at TribalYouth@TLPI.org!

Community Building in Action!

THE TYRC VISITS TRIBAL YOUTH PROGRAMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY!



[Top Left] FY23 Tonkawa Tribal Youth Program team pauses for a group photo during Strategic Planning Training in April 2024

[Top Right] FY23 Yurok Tribe Tribal Youth Program team members work together on TYP goals during Strategic Planning Training in April 2024

[Bottom Left] FY22 Penobscot Nation Tribal Youth Program team at a community lunch during Strategic Planning Training in March 2024

[Bottom Right] An action photo of an engaging activity during the Squaxin Island Indigenous Model of Restorative Practices Training in April 2024

News Flash!

TYRC YOUNG LEADER SAM SCHIMMEL PART OF TEAM WORKING TO INCLUDE ALASKA NATIVES AND AMERICAN INDIANS IN AMBER ALERT SYSTEM



Pictured Above: Sam Schimmel

At the American Bar Association (ABA) mid-year meeting, the House of Delegates passed Resolution 504 to recognize the need to enhance the AMBER Alert system to protect and support Alaska Natives and American Indians. Resolution 504 urges federal, state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to ensure that the AMBER Alert system is applied not just to minors, but to any Alaska Natives and American Indians (AI/AN) (even over the age of 18) who are reported missing, abducted, or in potential danger. The application the resolution would include a notification of the report to be displayed to all individuals within the state or 100 miles of the boundary of the state's network, and would push for the U.S. Department of Justice to hire regional Tribal AMBER Alert Coordinators to facilitate the reporting and communicate with law enforcement.

Resolutions passed by the ABA, reflecting the organization's stance on social and legal issues, can have a significant impact on guiding the development of, education around, and advocacy for passing law and changing policy. Among other examples of ABA influence, the ABA Resolution 301, "Violence Against Women Act and Similar Legislation," urging Congress "to strengthen tribal jurisdiction to address violence on tribal lands that are committed by non-Indian perpetrators who have specific ties to the tribe," played a significant role in influencing the landmark Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 to strengthen Tribal jurisdiction in this area.[1]

The Tribal Youth Resource Center Newsletter team had the privilege of speaking with Tribal Youth Resource Center Young Leader Sam Schimmel (St. Lawrence Island Siberian Yupik and Kenaitze Indian) who was and remains involved in the creation, movement, and passing of Resolution 504. "There was a lot of work behind the scenes before this was brought forward to the American Bar Association," he noted, "it is a continuation of work that started almost two years ago."

[1] [Native-American-Concerns-ABA-Policies.pdf](#) (nativeamericanbar.org)

Sam recounted a memory of sitting in Seattle with other folks when “an AMBER Alert went out [notifying us that] we had lost someone in our community.” A conversation began that led Sam to the question: “How can that system be used to bring home our relatives?” Alongside Lily Painter (Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma and the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska), advocate and activist working towards building awareness around and solutions to address Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP), Sam began doing research on the statutory authority of AMBER Alerts and methods through which a parallel system could be legally adapted for Tribes using that same infrastructure.

From its inception, Sam notes, it was quickly endorsed by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. Kenaitze Tribal Chair Bernadine Atchison, as well as Vice Chair Mary Ann Mills, Secretary Ronette Stanton, and other members of Tribal Council supported the proposal and supported in moving it forward. Since then, networking efforts and ongoing work from many parties involved, the bill gained support from a number of Tribes and endorsements from National Congress of American Indians and the Alaska Federation of Natives. Then, Sam presented the idea to Mary Smith, President of the American Bar Association, while she was in Anchorage, Alaska at a reception. Sam described that conversation: “I walked up to [Mary] and said, ‘I have this thing we’ve been working on. Eight tribes support it, the NCAI supports it. What can the ABA do?’” Smith quickly reconnected Sam with Jerry Gardner, Executive Director of the Tribal Law and Policy Institute and introduced

him to Paula Shapiro, Director of the American Bar Association Civil Rights & Social Justice Section. Over the next few months, Sam noted, they worked with Gardner, Shapiro, and a team of others to “draft the reports and other things that were needed for the ABA to pick up the resolution.” Sam frequently and repeatedly emphasized the role that so many individuals played and continue to play to ensure that the proposal got where it needed to go and that it was structured in a format that would be approved. This resolution “wouldn’t have gotten through the ABA process if it wasn’t for many Native and [civil rights-driven folks spending] countless hours taking what Tribes had endorsed and putting it into formats that institutions can get behind,” Sam shared. “At its core, this is a Tribal effort, intended to be driven by and for Tribes.” Resolution 504 passed unanimously.

Reflecting on the process, Sam highlighted, “these are relatively cheap changes that will effectively address a prevalent issue using an existing system. We’re not creating a whole new system that Tribes have to learn and states have to cooperate with - we’re just adding to it.”

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**AT ITS CORE, THIS IS A TRIBAL
EFFORT, INTENDED TO BE DRIVEN
BY AND FOR TRIBES.**

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That system, which has proven effective for recovering minors across the country, could and should be used to protect and serve AI/AN communities. "This will not result in 100% recovery of everyone who goes missing," Sam recognizes, "but it will improve the conditions and recovery rates... AI/AN murder and disappearance rates are four times the national average. It's time we start to address the issue in new and effective ways."

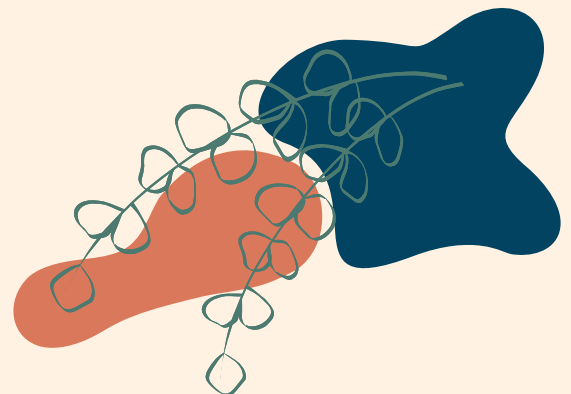
When asked what's comes next, Sam highlighted that the work - his work, in collaboration with Painter, alongside all supporters - does not stop here. "What's next is a bifurcated but still cohesive effort to pursue...additional support for the proposal and to lobby specific members of Congress to try to get them to introduce it." He continued, "there's going to be more work trying to convince [necessary] parties why this is a program that will work. Additional support behind the proposal will be critical in making that happen." He is determined, hopeful, and ready: "We're going to work to try and get whatever needs to be done - done, in order to get this passed into law."

Currently, there is an Amber Alert in Indian country effort funded by OJJDP that focuses on AI/AN missing children. You can access more information about that effort and request TTA at [AMBER Alert in Indian Country](#) | [AMBER Alert \(ojp.gov\)](#)

Sam Schimmel can be contacted at samueluschimmel@gmail.com and would love to engage with others who care about this issue.

MORE ABOUT SAM SCHIMMEL

Sam is St. Lawrence Island Siberian Yupik and Kenaitze Indian from Kenai, Alaska. From as far back as he can remember, he has kept life lessons front and center. "Listen to your elders, listen to your people, listen to stories told to you." Sam uses Native Knowledge to influence and direct local as well as national community efforts to better the lives of Alaska Natives and American Indians. He grew up berry picking, subsistence hunting, and fishing. He was a 2017 Center for Native American Youth Champion for Change. In 2018, he was appointed by the Governor of Alaska to serve on the State of Alaska's Climate Action Leadership Team, where he helped craft the state's policy on climate change. In 2019, the National Congress of American Indians recognized him with the Youth Leadership Award. In 2020, he was awarded the Alaska Federation of Native's Presidents' Youth Leadership Award. In 2021, Sam launched Operation Fish Drop, a program which sought to give urban Native populations access to traditional foods during the Covid-19 pandemic. Sam graduated from Stanford University in 2022. He continues to be an invested member of his community, supporting and often directing positive change for Alaska Native and American Indians. He spent his 1L summer Clerking for the Alaska Native Justice Center and is now in his second year of Law School at Georgetown University.





INTERESTED IN IMPLEMENTING AN INTERVENTION?

The Tribal Youth Resource Center has a team of professionals that can assist with training, resources, and community partner identification that can support system change and improvement—just reach out to us at TribalYouth@TLPI.org or fill out a training request on the Tribal Youth Resource Center website: TribalYouth.org.

The Tribal Youth Resource Center Quarterly Newsletter is a resource for all OJJDP funded tribal grantees and other interested communities.

For ongoing news, events, resources you can subscribe to the Tribal Youth Resource Center E-Weekly distribution list by clicking on the link below.

TribalYouth.org/subscribe



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The [Tribal Youth Resource Center](#) is a cooperative partner of the [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention](#) and is housed at the [Tribal Law and Policy Institute](#).



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www.TribalYouth.org