



# CULTURE IS PREVENTION



## NATIVE CULTURE IS PREVENTIVE

- ▶ Research shows Native culture promotes wellness and has a strong preventative effect on mental health.
  - Connection to Native culture lowers risk for depression, substance abuse, and suicide.
  - Strong social support, especially supportive and connected families, also lowers the risk for suicide attempts among Native youth.
  - Increasing protective factors is more effective at reducing Native youth suicide rates than decreasing risk factors.



## NATIVE CULTURE IS PROTECTIVE

- ▶ By supporting Native relationships, practices, languages, and traditions, we reinforce the factors known to protect Native mental health:
  - Connection to Native culture
  - Strong family bonds
  - Spiritual connections
  - Traditional practices

## HOW TO HELP!

### **BUILD BELONGING:**

Support Native kids in developing/deepening their connection to one another and to their Native culture.

### **SUPPORT CULTURAL PRACTICES:**

Traditional cultural practices like smudging, drumming, basket weaving, and talking circles build spiritual connections and promote wellness.

### **ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION**

in Native ceremonies and seasonal celebrations to deepen relationships, strengthen Tribal bonds, fortify collective health, and build hope.

### **TEACH SKILLS:**

Share knowledge and teachings of land-based skills such as harvesting, hunting, and fishing. Plant gardens and grow indigenous foods to cultivate Native food systems. Teach traditional techniques in indigenous arts and crafts.

### **CONNECT WITH NATURE:**

Offer outdoor experiences and camps that build connection to land and waterways.

### **PROMOTE LANGUAGES:**

Support the revitalization of Native languages and offer classes to youth.

### **INVEST IN RESILIENCE:**

Support efforts that address intergenerational trauma, reduce poverty, improve health, and strengthen social connectedness of Native communities.

#### SOURCES:

- SAMHSA, 2017. [Suicide Clusters within American Indian and Alaska Native Communities: A Review of the Literature and Recommendations.](#)
- BMC Public Health, 2023. [The Culture is Prevention Project: measuring cultural connectedness and providing evidence that culture is a social determinant of health for Native Americans](#)
- Indian Health Services, 2025. [Suicide Prevention and Care Program](#)



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