

Fact Sheet

Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for youth in New Mexico and suicide rates for Native American youth are nearly twice as high as for other races and ethnicities.

The Clearinghouse on Native American Suicide Prevention is a resource to tribes in New Mexico for suicide prevention and suicide response.

- In 2010, it is estimated that nearly two dozen Native American youth attempted suicide and another 18 fatalities were documented in western New Mexico
- 24 of the 54 youth suicides documented in New Mexico between 2008 and 2010 were Native American youth (a rate of 10.7/100,000, compared to an overall rate of 2.1/100,000 for white youth)
- Unrecognized and untreated mental illness is a main culprit for all youth suicides. 34.8% of Native youth in New Mexico in grades 9 through 12 reported feeling sadness and hopelessness.
- Isolation, poverty, loss of cultural and individual identity, historical trauma, substance abuse, and self-esteem issues all play into the increased risk for our Native American youth to take their own lives. In 2008, NM Voices for Children reported that 39.2% of Native children live in poverty – more than 3 times higher than white children.
- While effective culturally-based prevention and wellness programs are being developed, New Mexico tribal communities lack critical mental health resources and technical assistance to support community, family and individual assistance when suicide attempts and completed suicides occur
- Recognizing that New Mexico's 22 tribes are unique in their cultures and communities, there is value in having a central site to provide tribal suicide prevention and post-vention information, data, training, evaluation, and support
- In 2010, a statewide work group was created between tribes, the UNM Center for Rural and Community Behavioral Health, the State of New Mexico, and the Indian Health Service to begin coordination of information and support statewide to decrease the risk of suicide in tribal communities and strengthen communities' responses if a suicide occurs
- The goals of the Clearinghouse on Native American Suicide Prevention include additional coordination of efforts across tribes, development of coordinated data agreements and collection, grant-writing partnerships, website development, and technical assistance on system coordination

Clearinghouse on Native American Suicide Prevention
MSC09 5030, 1 UNM
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001
Phone: (505) 272-6238
www.honoringnativelife.org

Honoring Native Life