

Project: Classes and the Gathering Indian Health Center of Santa Clara Valley



Indian Health Center
of Santa Clara Valley

LOCATION

San Jose, CA



GROUPS SERVED

- American Indians and Alaska Natives
- Youth, Adults, and Elders (All ages)

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OVERVIEW

The Strengthening Youth and Families Project is a prevention/early intervention program that aims to prevent and/or reduce signs of early onset mental illness for American Indian people in Santa Clara County by 1) increasing knowledge of mental health factors of historical trauma, suicide prevention, and stigma and discrimination reduction 2) increasing knowledge in access and linkage to treatment and wrap-around services 3) increasing knowledge of cultural appropriateness of services provided and 4) increase knowledge of signs of early onset of mental illness.

Strengthening Youth and Families programming revolves around the principle that Native American mental health and Native American culture are intertwined. All programming offers instruction in cultural skill-building and values as well as a connection to the broader Santa Clara County Native community. Many folks in urban areas are denied access to cultural resources, and this programming offers them an opportunity to find community and healing in a cultural context. In this way, Native Americans in Santa Clara County are rising above historical trauma and creating a healthy, happy, and strong community.



GOALS



GOAL 1. To Prevent Mental Illness and/or Reduce its severity among the Native American Population in California: By providing cultural protective factors to our community.

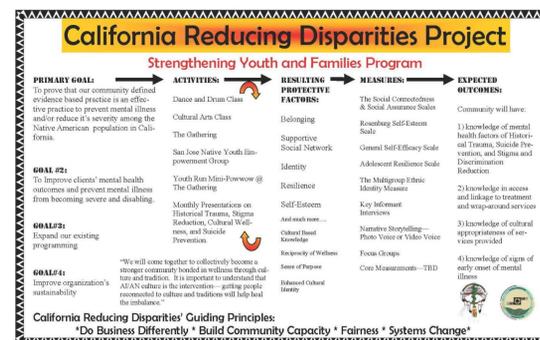


GOAL 2. To Improve Clients' Mental Health Outcomes and Prevent Mental Illness from Becoming Severe and Disabling.



GOAL 3. Expand our existing programming: Using community readiness assessments, focus groups, and other evaluation tools to understand the needs of our community to create programs to meet those needs.

GOAL 4. Improve organization's sustainability.



STRATEGIES

The Strengthening Youth and Families Project consist of these programs:

- San Jose Native Youth Empowerment Group
 - Native Youth ages 10-17 come together every Thursday on a weekly basis to express themselves in talking circles, play traditional games, and learn/practice culture. Every activity emphasizes culture and each group is opened with a smudge and prayer.
- Traditional Drum Class
 - Teaches young boys and men about the importance of the drum, why the drum is a vital instrument throughout the tribes of North America, how to keep traditional songs alive, and the singers role in the community.
- Traditional Dance Class
 - Teaches young girls and boys, men, and women, the value of different styles of dance, the healing that is received from dancing, and to dance for those that cannot. Teaches the protocol of powwow dancing, how it is necessary to take care of oneself physically by eating healthy, exercising, and taking care of one's regalia.
- Cultural Arts
 - To learn how our ancestors' would craft and give generously in order to preserve the precious artworks of culture and spread the knowledge of culture. Facilitators from different tribes come in to teach how to create beadwork, shawls, quilts, T-Dress', basketry, and etc.
- The Gathering
 - A four day campout that focuses on the GONA curriculum, belonging, mastery, interdependence, and generosity. This campout and curriculum brings families together to take them out of an urban setting and teach them cultural protective factors to prevent substance use, suicide, and mental illness.
- Mini-Powwow
 - Brings the community together to celebrate the Drum and Dance class participants for their accomplishments and growth and to honor cultural community leaders.



OUTCOMES

Note: Results are still being collected, so should be considered preliminary.

Participant surveys have demonstrated large increases between baseline (n=37) and both 6-month (n=18) and 12-month (n=15) follow-ups in social connectedness, self-efficacy, and resilience, and decreases in psychological distress. For example:

- % reporting "strongly agree" to several measures of social connectedness have increased from 21-25% at baseline to 46-64% at 6- and 12-month follow-ups (e.g., "I feel connected to the people around me")
- Scores on the General Self-Efficacy Scale -- measuring belief in ability to cope with obstacles -- increased from 31.8 at baseline to 34.3 at 6-months and 35.8 at 12-months.
- Scores on the Adolescent Resilience Scale -- measuring perceived ability to overcome challenges -- improved from 76.2 at baseline to 80.2 at 6-months and 80.4 at 12-months.
- Using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale, symptoms of psychological distress decreased from an average score of 8.0 at baseline to 6.9 at 6-months and 4.0 at 12-months.



NEXT STEPS

Continue to expand evaluation by enrolling more participants in evaluation and gathering more qualitative data

- Conduct more community assessment activities to ensure that programming is meeting community needs and to determine if changes need to be made
- Grow programming by offering consistent and meaningful classes, groups, and cultural gatherings
- Establish sustainability for programming beyond CRDP Phase II

