Tanana Chiefs Conference

Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention Project
Division of Wellness and Prevention
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Services 38 Villages in the TCC Region, including Upper Kuskokwim & Lower Yukon Subregions

Photo by Rachel Saylor
Prevention

- The Prevention Program provides health promotion, disease prevention, injury prevention and suicide prevention.
- Tribal Councils, clinics, community members, and/or schools can request training or educational material.
- Program staff is available to travel to any community in the region to provide requested services.
Prevention Programs

- Health and Safety Education
- Injury Prevention
- Suicide Prevention
- Homecare Services
- Tobacco Prevention
Suicide Prevention Program

Within our GLS Grant we can provide the following suicide prevention trainings:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- SafeTALK
- Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
- Mental Health First Aid
- Sources of Strength
- Life Skills Curriculum
Sources of Strength

- Sources of Strength is a program designed to break the mold of silence and secret keeping among youth when it comes to suicidal behavior and thought.
- It encourages youth to seek help among each other to avoid trying to help all by themselves.
- It helps youth work with at risk peers to help them identify their strengths identified on the Wheel of Strength.
- Youth participants create messages of hope, help and strength, and they are more likely to listen to their peers.
Sources of Strength & TCC

- TCC originally started working with the program in 2013 and has been kicked off in 19 communities within the region
- Mark LoMurray, the Founder and Director worked with TCC to meet rural needs
- Adapted the curriculum to fit community and cultural needs
Typical Sources of Strength

- Typically to implement the program, students participants are identified by teachers and peers. Select number of students participate from each site location.
- Peer Leader Training is 7-8 hours.
- Adult Advisor Training is 4 hours or a Training for Trainers can be hosted for 5 days.
- Specific messages and program activities are outlined and discussed.
TCC Sources of Strength

- TCC originally followed the implementation plan for Sources of Strength in the first year.
- Feedback from schools and students showed that specific changes to how the program was implemented needed to be changed.
- Corrective Action dictates how much time we get in each school.
Specific Changes to the program:

- Peer Leader Trainings are limited to 3-4 hours instead of 7-8 hours
- All middle and high school students are welcome to participate in the program
- Adult Advisors are invited to participate in the training
- A 1-2 hour follow-up meeting is scheduled with the Adult Advisors
- Program activities and messages are very different
Culture and Sources of Strength

- TCC recognized that culture was an important part of success to the program
- A joint research project with the UAF- Center for Alaska Native Health Research found that the program was more accepted in the community when cultural activities were involved
- To involve culture, program staff took a step back from the community and allowed them to take charge
- Site coordinators (volunteers) are responsible for outlining local activities with their youth
Culture cont...

- To capture the youth perspective site coordinators have youth outline what activities they would like to see done in their community
- They plan out one activity per month with the site coordinator
- Activity types vary between groups and site location
Culture cont...

- We found that more students participate in activities when:
  - They pick the activity they are going to do
  - They assist in planning the activity
  - When their local culture and activities are involved
  - Food and beverages are included
Sample Activities

- Snowshoeing
- Lock-ins with prevention messaging
- Camping with safety messaging (fire, gun, water)
- Berry picking
- Sledding parties
- Movie nights with healthy snacks
- Sports activities
Importance of Local Groups

- Provides youth with a healthy activity in their community
- Encourages youth to find their voice and to participate in activities
- Youth get to dictate what they want for prevention activities
- Increases the ability to identify individual strengths
Questions and/or Comments?

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