

Wiconi Ohitika Youth Suicide Prevention Project Cultural Strengthening: The Core Component in Suicide Prevention

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Objectives for this Presentation

- Increased understanding of the centrality of culture in suicide prevention.
- Increased knowledge about how culture can be implemented in a suicide prevention program to increase connectedness at various level of the ecology.
- Increased ability to operationalize the use of culture in suicide prevention programs through an interactive exercise.

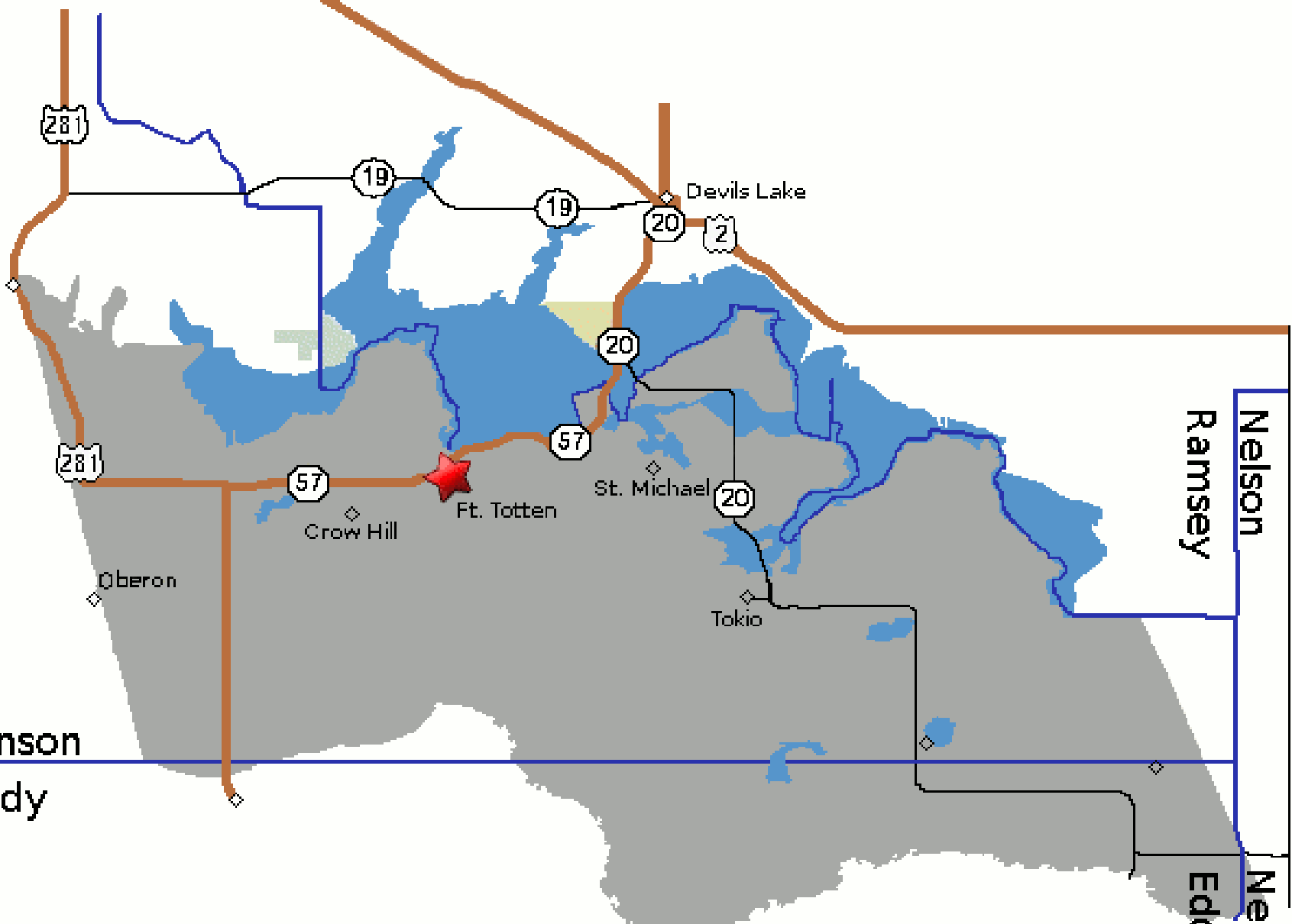
the centrality of culture in suicide prevention

The spiritual values,
traditions, history of
Native Americans and
Spirit Lake Nation are all
connected.

To strengthen us as a
Dakota nation, we need
our traditions, culture, and
spirituality. We learn from
the past to change the
present and to prepare
ourselves and our people
for the future...

the centrality of culture in suicide prevention

- Spirit Lake Nation
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College
- Wiconi Ohitika
- Youth
- Families
- Community



Spirit Lake Nation

Cankdeska Cikana Community College



- Established in 1974 as a two year land-grant institution tribal community college .
- Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and is a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium and the North Dakota Association of Tribal Colleges.

The Wiconi Ohitika project

A culturally enriched approach to youth suicide prevention, based on:

- the culture, language, values and history of the Spirit Lake Dakota (Mni Wakan Oyate),
- promoting positive self-identity, increased self-esteem, and
- increased knowledge of the Dakota way of life.

Wiconi Ohitika Goals

- Goal 1. Project Implementation and Community Engagement.
- Goal 2. Partner with Four Winds Middle & High School, Warwick Middle & High School, Youth Healing & Wellness to provide suicide prevention support.
- Goal 3. Implement suicide prevention training to the community, educators, and care providers.
- Goal 4. Strengthening the Community and increasing connectedness.
- Goal 5. Increased awareness of suicide prevention.
- Goal 6. Evaluate the Wiconi Ohitika Project.

Wiconi Ohitika Staff

Staff:

- Dr. Cynthia Lindquist, Principal Investigator
- Antonette Halsey, VP Community & Library Services
- Cora Whiteman, Project Coordinator
- Lindsey Walking Eagle, Data Technician & Admin. Asst.
- Arlis Littlewind, Youth Prevention Specialist
- Tanya Jeanotte, Youth Prevention Specialist
- Lorraine Greybear, Cultural Specialist
- Pat Conway, Evaluator

Consultants:

- Deb Hanson, LISW, Instructor
- Mark Lomurray, Creator of Sources of Strength
- Rick Thomas, Creator of Red Road
- Gene Thin Elk, Creator of Red Road

culture in suicide prevention programming

- Youth
 - Culture Camp: American Indian Contributions to the World
 - The Red Road Approach
 - Culture Strengthening seminar held yearly
- Families
 - Takoja Niwiciyape
- Community
 - Coalition: Crisis Response Plan
 - Elders Video and public service announcements
 - Wicozani Oigduhe (Healthy Living) Prayer Day

culture and suicide prevention programming with youth: Culture Camp, American Indian Contributions to Science



Emory Keoke, Lakota
and Author of
“American Indian
Contributions to
the World”
visits with the
children in summer
reading camp

Red Road Approach

Evaluation:

Qualitative Survey

What was most important?

The calmness, spiritual feeling – positive energy!

Sacred Laws of the Indigenous Oyate.

The talk about suicide prevention and our culture.

Cultural Experience



- Knowledge of traditional practices is shared by local elders/experts in:
- Beading
 - Star quilt making
 - Regalia making
 - Singing at the Drum
 - Moccasin making
 - Storytelling

culture in suicide prevention programming with families: Takoja Niwiciyape (Giving Life to the Grandchildren)



Cultural Experience



culture in suicide prevention programming in the community: The Spirit Lake Suicide Prevention Coalition's crisis response plan

Spirit Lake Health Center (I.H.S.)

SL Emergency Medical Services

Lake Region Human Services Center

Educational Talent Search

CCCC Health & Nutrition

SL Tribal Court

Mercy Hospital

Area school counselors and
administrators

SL Law Enforcement

Local ministers and spiritual leaders

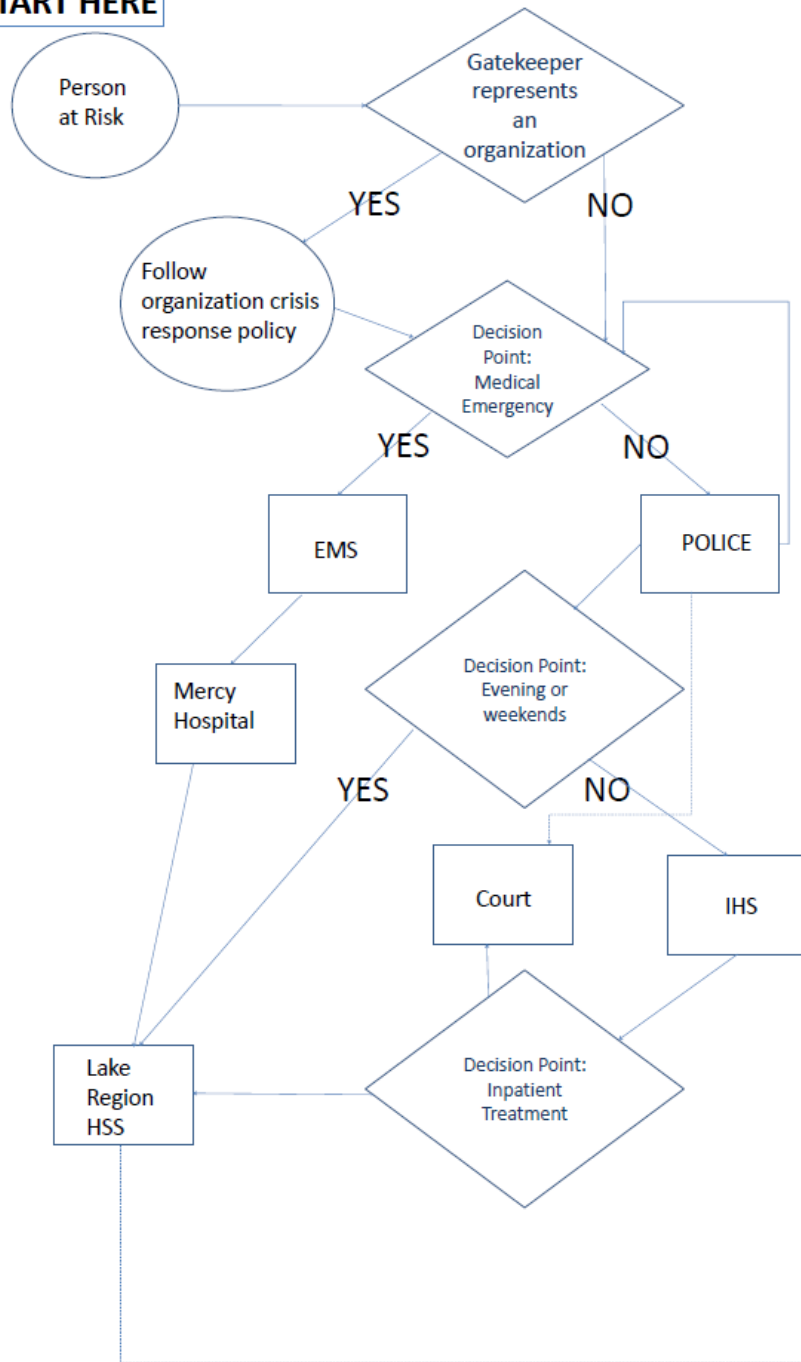
Community members



Spirit Lake Crisis Plan

START HERE

Spirit Lake
Nation Suicide
Crisis Response
Plan



Elders Advisory Council

- Meeting monthly
- Approve project products
- School presentations
- Plan cultural strengthening seminar utilizing local experts
- “Wiconi Wakan” (Life is Sacred) videos and PSAs

Elders Speak



Wicozani Oigduhe (Healthy Living) Prayer Day

Theme based with emphasis on “Strong Life”

- Healing through Music
- Sobriety...a Strong Life
- Generations Connecting for a Strong Life
- Strength of Our Youth
- Arvol Looking Horse
- Bear Project

Creating Your Story

- Jamie's Story
- Your Story