



ALASKA: In Northwest Arctic, a Powerful Tool in Combating Suicide: Training Youths to Help Each Other

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News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark News

State: Alaska

[Alaska Dispatch News](#) [1]

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is leading a statewide initiative to reduce suicide in Alaska Native communities. With a new \$4.25 million, five-year federal grant, the university plans to investigate the effectiveness of community-based prevention efforts. The initiative will bring together Native stakeholders and researchers to evaluate the success of programs in 65 western Alaska communities focused on resilience and culture, and establish a hub for sharing information. Among the programs involved in the initiative is the Youth Leaders Program in the Northwest Arctic Borough School District. Since the peer mentoring program was launched in 2008, the school district has seen a reduction in student suicide deaths. In the past two years, the program has strengthened linkages with the community and increased its focus on culture, bringing tribal elders into schools to teach traditional skills. "This is the type of effort that typically doesn't get reported about in newspapers and scientific literature—what works," said Jim Allen, University of Minnesota professor and a leader of the new initiative. "We really want to grow this effort in describing examples like this one, of a community really doing something right."

Spark Extra! Learn more about [suicide prevention in Alaska Native settings](#) [2].

Populations: Racial and Ethnic Groups, American Indians and Alaska Natives

Settings: American Indian/Alaska Native Settings

Planning and Implementing: Culturally Based Practices

Strategies: Life Skills and Resilience

Links within this resource

[1] <https://www.adn.com/arctic/2017/07/09/in-northwest-arctic-a-powerful-tool-in-combating-suicide-training-youths-to-help-each-other/>

[2] <http://www.sprc.org/settings/aian>

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