



## What People Get Wrong About Suicides on Tribal Lands

January 18, 2019

News Type: Weekly Spark, Weekly Spark News

[HuffPost](#) [1]

Native Americans are at higher risk for suicide than the general population, but suicide rates vary widely across tribal communities. That variation is important to keep in mind, according to Doreen Bird, an expert on tribal mental health. Each Native community has different mental health challenges and ways of coping with them. Bird recommends that researchers get to know these differences, as well as the specific cultural context of each tribal group, such as their views on illness and death. Involving Native people in prevention efforts can help ensure programs leverage local resources to meet the needs of the community. For example, in Bird's New Mexico Kewa Pueblo Tribe, spirituality and family are key sources of support. "As outsiders trying to make an impact, it behooves us to look at strengths and resilience that lie within each community," said Bird.

**Spark Extra!** Watch [Doreen Bird's SPARK Talk](#) [2].

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

Settings: American Indian/Alaska Native Settings, Communities

About Suicide: Risk and Protective Factors

Planning and Implementing: Culturally Based Practices, Cultural Competence

Strategies: Life Skills and Resilience, Connectedness

### Links within this resource

[1] [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/native-american-tribal-suicides-mental-health\\_us\\_5c11218ce4b084b082fedbc2](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/native-american-tribal-suicides-mental-health_us_5c11218ce4b084b082fedbc2)

[2] <http://www.sprc.org/video/native-americans>

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