Bristol Bay Area Health

Program Name: Yuutpiciryarit (Our Way of Life) Peer Prevention Program
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Suicide is an on-going epidemic in the state of Alaska. Suicide rates among Alaskan Natives (AN) are higher than any other ethnicity in the state and unfortunately according to the YRBSS (2009), 13.9% among Alaska youth seriously considered attempting suicide (vs. the US average of 13.1%); 11.7% made a suicide plan (vs. 10.7%), while 8.5% attempted suicide (vs. 9.6%). Moreover, risk factors such as alcohol and substance abuse, child abuse, and assaults can lead to suicide ideation, attempts, and even death. These risk factors have been a deep concern among AN rural villages where isolation in hard-to-reach communities in the Alaskan frontier promotes these behaviors.

The best way to combat this epidemic is early intervention. The Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation Yuutpiciryarit (Our Way of Life) Peer Prevention Program (PPP) is a suicide prevention program targeting 400 youth ages 12-18 years old for over three years in 11 Tribal Alaskan Villages and its surrounding communities. PPP is based on the concept and social support elements of the Recovery Community Services Program (RCSP) framework, a proposed Evidenced-Based Practice. It is a holistic and community approach where peers can help other peers move along the continuum by offering hope, motivation and general social support through Alaskan Native traditional practices and activities. By this help, from one caring youth to help another - a way of life among Alaskan Natives - referrals for mental health services early on can help reduce suicide ideation, attempts, and death in the villages.

The Goal of PPP is to promote a healthy community utilizing Alaskan Native practices and Evidence Based practices aim to reduce the number of suicides and suicide attempts among Bristol Bay adolescents 12-18 years of age.

The Objectives: By providing early intervention in substance and alcohol abuse, the number of suicides and suicide attempts will be reduced among adolescents 12-18 years of age, and by providing early intervention in child abuse and child sexual assaults, the number of suicides and suicide attempts will be reduced among adolescents 12-18 years of age will hopefully increase awareness about suicide prevention and referrals among youth through Alaskan Native cultural practices.

Yuutpiciryarit (Our Way of Life) Peer Prevention Program is a culturally competent, sensitive, and caring youth program that believes if the program can save even one life, the program is a success.
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