ALASKA: Alaska Native Youth Find Strength, Resilience in Ancient Traditions

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The Voice of America [1]

Researchers have developed a culturally based tool for promoting mental health and preventing suicide among Alaska Native youth. The Qungasvik is a training and teaching manual containing 36 activities based on traditional Yup'ik practices that aim to foster youth resilience. Named after the traditional Yup'ik toolbox, the manual includes activities designed to expand on local knowledge, such as opportunities for youth to connect with elders, learn about their heritage, and develop life skills. “Our elders instruct us that just as the musk ox surround their young to protect them from harm, we must gather together, form a circle and link hands around our youth,” said the narrator of a video included in the Qungasvik. “The point is to communicate to children that they are appreciated, valuable members of the community and have much to live for.” The Qungasvik was developed by Billy Charles and Stacy Rasmus at the University of Alaska Fairbanks’ Center for Alaska Native Health Research.

Spark Extra! Check out the Qungasvik [2].

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