

Native Youth Perspectives on Substance Abuse and Self Harm



**TRIBAL YOUTH
RESOURCE CENTER**

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Kaitlin Martinez, Youth Ambassador Mentor,
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Isabella Fridia

- Lakota Name: Hanhe Wi Iyoyanpa Win
- Wichita (Waco band), Kiowa, Caddo, and Hunka Lakota
- Undergraduate at the University of Denver, majoring in Physiology in Health and Disease
- Native Student Alliance cohort rep, TYRC Youth Ambassador, 2021 – 2023 Wichita Tribal Princess





James John II

- Yup'ik Name: Cikigaq
- Full time employee as an Office on Violence against Women (OVW) Youth Coordinator
- Self-owned business as a cake decorator/baker



► Kaitlin Martinez

- O'odham name: Juki Mad
- Akimel O'odham & Dine, born for the ban (coyote) clan
- Owner of The Ranch Mobile Eatery – food truck specialized in O'odham infused foods
- Proud 6th generation O'odham rancher



▶ James' Experience

- Grew up in a very well taught environment about life lessons & to avoid anything that will demolish my future
- Lost my father from substance abuse
- Mainly grew up with my grandmother that taught me very well not to confiscate drugs & alcohol
- Kept mind busy by doing arts & crafts and subsistence gathering for my family & elders





- Self-Harm- 20%
- Substance Abuse 25%
- Drugs- 45%

STRENGTH FAITH HOPE LOVE SURVIVAL
Awareness Helps Save Lives
Let's Find A Cure!

▶ Kaitlin's Experience



- Big family, we all grew up fast
- We saw a lot of bad in our community, but as a family we all kept each other motivated
- There was always something to do, we didn't have much time to "goof off"
- 'Stick to the course'
- Huge thank you to my parents & grandparents for always expecting more of us
- Had great role models
- Also had a lot of people who were the perfect example of 'what not to do'

▶ Bella's Experience

- Family history of drug and alcohol abuse
- Grew up in many different communities where youth were suffering from substance abuse
- Its hard seeing friends go down the wrong path
- School experiences (overdoses, alcohol poisoning)
- Stayed connected to my culture and spirituality



We Are All Unique and We All Matter

- Native communities are diverse
- We are strong
- We are worthy
- We are loved
- We are here
- We are the prayers of our ancestors
- We are sacred
- We are strong
- We are loved
- You Matter!



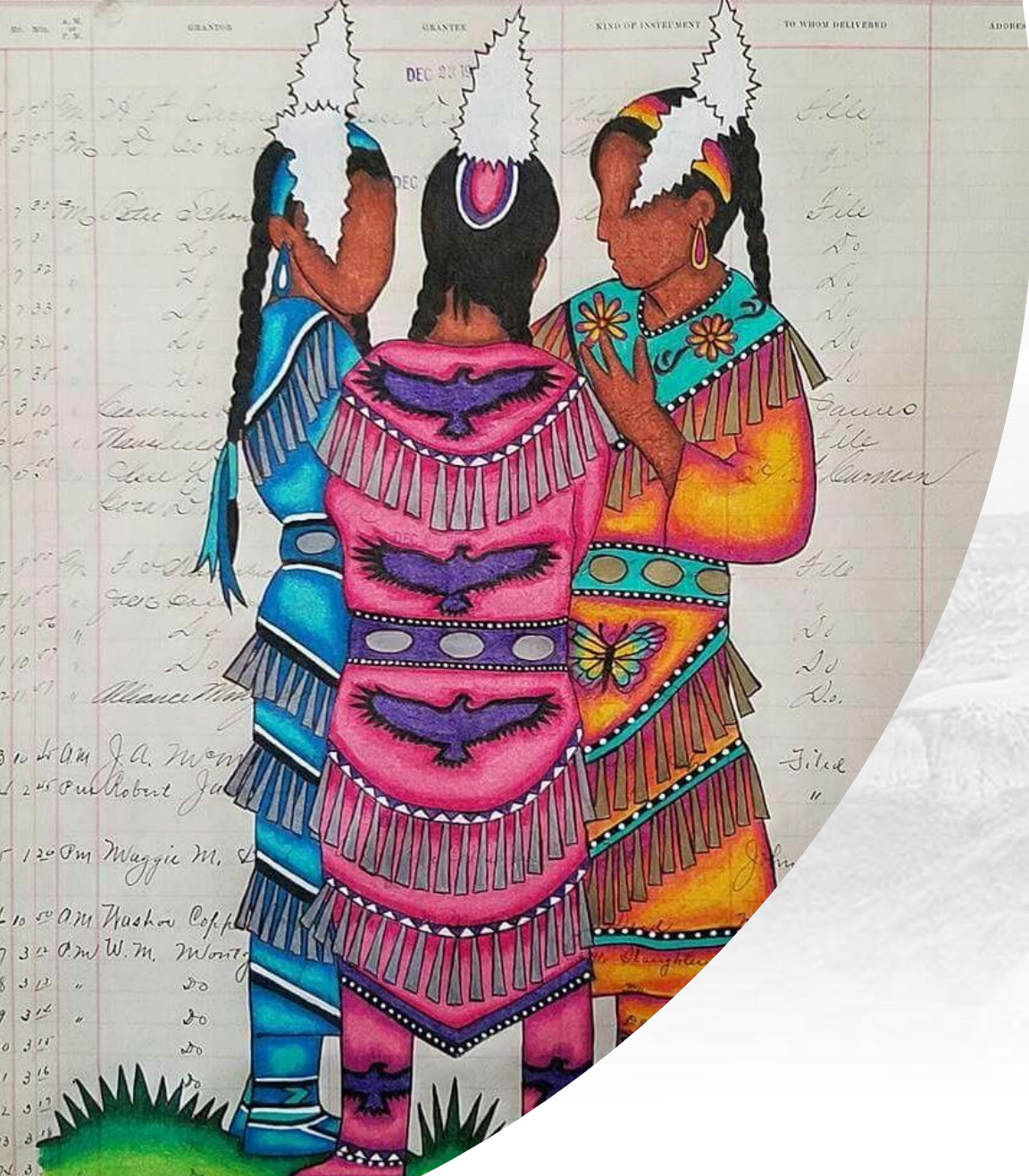
► Recommendations & Ideas

- Gather youth within your community and hear their perspectives
 - talking circles
 - surveys
 - what do they want in their community
 - elder advice
- Events created and led by youth
- Have family nights to keep the family busy with activities



▶ Recommendations & Ideas continued

- Get back into a routine
- Start small set reachable goals
- Prioritize your mental health
- Your medicine and prayer will take you a long way
- Be good to yourself, talk nice to yourself
- Protect your peace
- Set healthy boundaries
- Take healthy risks
- Recognize / celebrate your growth



Helpful Resources

- We R Native (Text NATIVE to 94449)
- SAMHSA (facts, data)
- Culture (Culture is Prevention)
- Gila River Indian Community crisis hotline (1-800-259-3449)
- GRIC Yes To LIFE (prevention services)
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Admin (BHS service locator)
- Youth Regional Treatment Centers (ihs.gov)
- Department of Health and Human Services (youth.gov)
- Elder Advice (They have been through it all, they have good advice to confer)





QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



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Envisioning a future where Indigenous youth thrive through traditional lifeways.

This project was supported by Grant 15PJDP-21-GK-04048-MUMU awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.





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