The Journey of

Collaborative Evaluation With Tribal Communities

2024

Center for
Native Child
and Family Resilience

Acknowledgements

The Children's Bureau funded the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (the Center) to gather and disseminate information about Tribally relevant practice models, interventions, and services—developed by and for American Indian and Alaska Native populations—that contribute substantively to child maltreatment prevention efforts and to family resilience. The Center partnered with five project sites for 4 years (2019–2022) to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention/intervention programs for these children and families. This document (1) summarizes lessons from the project-driven evaluations conducted in support of building evidence for Tribally led child welfare initiatives and (2) includes portions of materials the Center team created over the course of the cooperative agreement. It represents the work of:

Center Primary Writers

Sonja Ulrich, JBS International, Inc. (JBS)

Joe Walker, JBS

Michael Cavanaugh, L&M Policy Research

Matt Burstein, formerly of JBS

Brian Jones, JBS

Center Contributors

Arleen Rodriguez-Jacoby, Children's Bureau

Robert Lindecamp, Children's Bureau

Erin Sandor, JBS

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INTRODUCTION

About the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

The National Quality Improvement Center for Preventive Services and Interventions in Indian Country was established on October 1, 2017, as a 5-year grant from the Children's Bureau (CB). Renamed the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (the Center). The Center partnered with Tribes to examine solutions for healing ongoing trauma persisting from historical injuries shared by many Tribal communities. Due to the availability of additional funding, the Center has been operational from 2017–2024.[i]

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

The Center brought together experts in child welfare, Indigenous communities, and evaluation to promote Tribally created solutions to child maltreatment. Its work includes sharing information about existing programs uncovered during a full literature review and environmental scan, as well as working directly with Tribal organizations to prepare their child maltreatment prevention and intervention work for replication. In addition, the Center worked with Indigenous child welfare experts to create a first-of-its-kind Resilience-Informed Care Training, developed to help Tribal communities center on and build community resilience as a protective factor to child maltreatment.

The Center uses community-based and -collaborative evaluation models compatible with Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) to build knowledge and empower Tribal communities of care. Through program development and evaluation assistance, it supported culturally grounded and Tribally created child and family service programs built upon Native philosophies, community- and practice-based evidence, behavioral norms, relationships, and attributes as part of culturally engaged and congruent community wellness.

Indigenous communities have their own knowledge and deeply held traditions, culture, and practices that foster and strengthen family resilience and connectedness. Emphasis on belonging and ethnic pride, positive social connections to people and land, and sense of spiritual strength and cultural resilience often act as protective factors to prevent and heal the effects of generational trauma and historical harm. Increasingly, Native and non-Native allies focus on strengthening these and other protective factors to help and heal American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) families who face violence, abuse, and child maltreatment.[1]

Unlike Western models and practices often used by social service agencies operating in Tribal communities, programs developed for and by Indigenous communities rely on Native beliefs and values to heal trauma and abuse and are more likely to be embraced and sustained in the long run. Although

i See Appendix A to learn about the design of the Two Bears Logo.

the need for strengthening community-driven programs to reduce child maltreatment is greater than ever, the path to identifying and supporting these programs has not always been a straight or easy one. Scholars and researchers in Indigenous communities have rightly been mistrustful of Western-led efforts to conduct research in their communities because of historical exploitation and misuse of data. Widespread use and acceptance of Western norms in research have led to a steep imbalance of power and left limited space for Native perspectives, methods, and priorities.

Epistemic practices in Indigenous communities—IWOK—exist within a context of spiritual and cultural knowledge handed down through the generations by community knowledge bearers. A communities' ways of knowing must fit contextually into the culturally specific contours of its history, place, and worldview. This contrasts with the epistemic practices of Western social sciences, which purport to reveal more universal truths. The distinction between Western practices and IWOK is not merely theoretical, as it burdens most evaluation work in Indian Country. The challenges here become more acute given the history of Western inquiry in Indian Country.

Bridging Western and Indigenous approaches requires understanding the underlying values, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions built into AI/AN and Western worldviews, especially those found in the culture's guiding story. Although language and metaphors are central to making knowledge in Western and Indigenous cultures, they differ significantly based on how each of these peoples interpret, structure, and organize the world. Common to Indigenous worldviews is the interdependent nature of life, which is found in such symbolic expressions as Nii-ka-nii-ga-naa (Anishinaabe) or "all my relations." It is a part of a philosophy that signifies the relationship with the land and all life forms. This essential relationship guides learning, development, and behavior for Indigenous people.[2] With its roots in the guiding story, this expression acknowledges that human beings hold knowledge not as above the natural world around us, but as an experiential and intuitive pattern of knowing. The cultural stories or narrative forms reinforce the notion of relatedness, as when one remembers the stories through song, dance, and ceremony, and they are reminded of how we were meant to be. An example of this multimodal storytelling approach appears below in the use of mind mapping with project sites.

Goal of The Journey of Collaborative Evaluation With Tribal Communities (the Guide)

Over the past seven years, the Center team has worked closely with five Tribal communities to support the replication and evaluation of their community programs focused on preventing and/or intervention of child maltreatment. To support the continued efforts in Indian Country and communities in a non-Western approach, the Center partnered with the CB to document the story of the project, including key insights and lessons learned in collaborating with Tribes and in implementing child welfare programming in Indian Country. These lessons describe how a non-Indigenous organization can be successful in collaborating with Tribal organizations and communities, highlighting how adjusting practices, behavior, language, and attitudes led to better results for us, our partners, and the communities we worked with.

Critical to these efforts was understanding how relationships are at the center of life in Indian Country. Cultivating genuine partnerships with Tribal organizations and communities helps bridge intercultural gaps, promotes bidirectional learning, and fosters a sense of trust that results in better evidence gathering with more authentic and representative information about programs. This collaborative model, based on IWOK principles, was successful in partnership and program development. As we share our lessons below, we attempted to create a document that would support researchers, evaluators, and contractors working with Tribal communities to approach the work in a noncolonized way, ensuring the priorities of relationships, reciprocity, and humility are present in the work. The Guide includes sections and materials harvested from other documents the Center created to provide a holistic view of the work, lessons learned, and ideas for moving forward.

Although the Center had numerous Native staff, relied on a large community of Native consultants, and centered Native approaches to Tribal child welfare, the organization itself was federally funded and served its client, the CB (i.e., the Center was not an Indigenous organization). We mention this in part because we want to highlight that the Center occupied a position that might be similar to our audience of researchers working in Indian Country: The organization, including much of its staff, was not of the peoples whose work it was seeking to promote, and it knew enough to know significant, unique challenges arise from the historical and contemporary contexts of settler colonialism and Western approaches to knowledge making—in addition to potential social and cultural gaps.

At the onset of the project, our team relied upon the information outlined in A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities (the Roadmap). The Roadmap identifies values and priorities that can foster trust and build the knowledge and skills of Tribes, their evaluation partners, and other stakeholders to conduct more useful and meaningful evaluations of child welfare programs. This document can be seen as a companion guide to the Roadmap, operationalizing the concepts and providing examples through the lenses of the people who led the work over the past 7 years.

The lessons of the team were guided by knowledge experts in the field and by Indigenous leaders, who have been key to teaching the lessons. At their core, these lessons describe what efforts went into making a non-Indigenous organization successful in collaborating with Tribal organizations and communities to create materials for their child welfare programs and to help begin building evidence for them. Understanding how relationships are at the center of life in Indian Country was critical to these efforts. We entered into intentional and meaningful relationships with leaders of the community organizations to be more effective in our work together.

Evaluators who can be authentically present with their community partners build connections with people, organizations, and communities that elicit the best knowledge and outcomes. One way to address the power imbalance that comes with doing this work involves humility, vulnerability, and sharing who we are underneath our professional masks. We present our whole selves to demonstrate our willingness to share and learn from one another. This approach addresses power imbalances and invites a common sense of humanity and purpose. For many of us, being vulnerable brings discomfort, and it is important to sit with the discomfort rather than to turn away from or to suppress it. Some of the stories here reflect the kinds of emotional moments that don't typically appear in research methods or statements of lessons learned. However, the discomfort and vulnerability were critical to the process, deeply understanding the project, and development of genuine relationships.

Our team has been honored to be the partners with the communities with whom we worked, the CB, and Indigenous leaders across the nation. As a result, we want to ensure a legacy of the lessons learned continues with the hopes that it will support a more collaborative and noncolonized approach to evaluation in Indian Country. As a team, we believe it is critical that foundations, corporations, and government agencies that provide funding for grants that sustain child welfare programs and interventions be evaluated and assessed using Indigenous research methodologies; to do otherwise is to obscure or erase the epistemic norms, beliefs, and practices that Indigenous people have used since time immemorial.

> Building culturally responsive knowledge and evidence for what works and what doesn't requires a different kind of partnership among those involved, one that recognizes and integrates Indigenous cultural tenets of connectedness and collaboration and is based on humility and transparency.

As with most journeys, the first step involves the realization of a need: Why am I taking this journey? During the transition from youth to maturity, many young Native people look for visions as a means of offering prayers, knowledge gaining, and communication with spirits. The journey in this case starts with the realization that soon the person will become an adult and must seek out knowledge to see what life holds for them as a member of a Tribe. As a program evaluator, your journey also begins with the recognition of a need. In your case, it would be assumed that you are about to embark on a journey that will include providing program evaluation services for a Tribal grant project, so you must prepare for the journey

by gathering sufficient information that proves or disproves a theory about the program and the services being provided. As with life, this journey is fraught with pitfalls, do-overs, and challenges that may make you think you are on the wrong path. But often this path leads you to rich and rewarding outcomes, builds your knowledge, and improves your ability to be an evaluator in Indian Country.

This guide offers practical insights for researchers and evaluators working with Tribal communities. It covers:

- Preparing for collaboration with Tribal partners
- Building trust and authentic relationships
- Understanding and respecting Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Designing culturally responsive evaluation plans
- Developing appropriate tools for information gathering
- Analyzing and sharing results in a culturally respectful manner

Throughout, we emphasize the importance of community engagement, cultural humility, and bidirectional learning. Our aim is to support more effective, ethical, and meaningful evaluations that honor Tribal sovereignty and contribute to positive outcomes for Native children and families. The section below on ***Preparing for the Journey*** provides additional information to help you begin your evaluation journey through Indian Country.

The Story of Our Work

Any type of program or intervention in Indian Country should include core elements and foundational practices of working with AI/AN families and communities. Despite trainings and implementation of legislation aimed at ensuring the use of culturally relevant services in the protection of AI/AN children and families, there continues to be a lack of understanding among child welfare organizations about how to work effectively with AI/AN clients and about the cultural elements of effective practice in Tribal communities. As a result, it is important for researchers, evaluators, and technical assistance providers to recognize and apply the following core concepts for working in Indian Country:

- Worldview
- Spirituality
- Harmony and wellness
- Oppression
- Social dominance and wellness
- Cultural competence, assessment, and treatment

For example, while trauma-informed practice is increasingly widespread in child welfare practice, understanding the unique role of intergenerational and historical trauma—including the latter's ongoing manifestations—in AI/AN communities is crucial for ensuring success when adapting trauma-informed practices to these communities.

In preparation for the journey of the Center, the team wanted to better understand what Tribally created programs existed within the literature and how they were evaluated to understand their impact. Following an intensive search and review of hundreds of articles, the Center continued the search with an environmental scan to identify existing programs that may not have been present in the literature.

The Literature Review, Environmental Scan, and Cultural Resilience Factors

Many prevention models in Indian Country build resilience by using AI/AN cultural values, transmission of family traditions, and experiences of Tribal youth. Tribal communities' experiences suggest that these approaches are often effective in enhancing family resilience and in reducing the risks of harm to children and adults. Although the formal literature on these approaches is limited, the Center's 2019 review of that literature bears out the relationship between AI/AN culture and child and family resilience. Overall, we found that:

- **Culture matters:** Many of the Tribally created models addressed a specific Tribal community instead of creating solutions designed for all Tribes.
- **Mixed modalities enhance learning:** Many of the Tribally created models used mixed learning modalities, combining experiential with curriculum-based learning.
- **Community healing is wellness enhancement:** The AI/AN community and its culture are sources for and sites of wellness enhancement.
- **Youth interventions and bicultural skills enhancement improve resilience:** Improving youth aptitude with AI/AN cultures and mainstream Western culture bolsters youth resilience.

Standard child welfare literature inadequately represents the protective factors enhanced by Tribally created and adapted models. While this literature acknowledges some protective factors, it fails to account for those unique to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) cultures and communities. For centuries, Tribal communities have embraced tools for healthy living, which often go unnoticed or unappreciated when examining protective factors through a Western lens. Examples include:

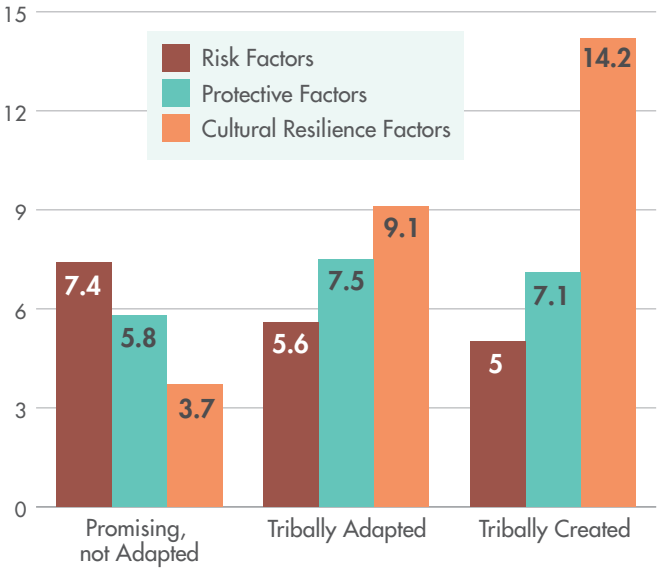
- Traditional healing practices
- Oral traditions and storytelling
- Spiritual practice/knowledge/ceremony
- Tribal identity and cultural connection
- Connection to ancestral lands
- Traditional foodways and practices
- Intergenerational knowledge transfer
- Extended kinship networks/elders/community connection
- Community wide child rearing practices
- Spiritual practices and beliefs
- Native languages
- Tribal sovereignty and self-governance
- Restorative justice practices

In the environmental scan, we included the kinds of cultural resilience factors listed above (among others) to expand the resources available for understanding the unique contributions of AI/AN communities to child welfare.

> "We know that Native American wisdom exists within our stories, language, ceremonies, songs, and teachings. We know our Native ways are effective. We know that these ways are different from the Western worldview. We know we are experts in practicing and implementing our traditional ways to enhance the health of our people. We know our ways are unique and specific to Tribal groups. The authenticity of our Native American cultural wisdom is acknowledged and validated by our families, our clans, our communities. This knowledge has been validated for centuries by our ancestors. This knowledge exists within American Indian and Alaska Native communities, it is known by our people, and we will protect this sacred knowledge."
>
> ***—American Indian and Alaska Native Cultural Wisdom Declaration, National Tribal Behavioral Health Agenda[3]***

As stated, following our 2019 literature review, the Center undertook an environmental scan to capture Indian Country's diversity of programming. We identified important community-level research and innovative demonstrations of cultural- and practice-based strategies the formal literature did not address. It incorporates and centers cultural resilience factors unique to Indian Country (e.g., issues pertaining to spirituality, land connection, foods, language, and mind-body connection). The results indicated a remarkable pattern in the way that cultural resilience factors manifest in programming at each level of Tribal adaptation, demonstrating a completely opposite pattern from risk factors. Tribally created models and programs target significantly more cultural resilience factors than Tribally Adapted and Promising, Not Adapted ones. This engagement of cultural resilience factors is related to increased Tribal agency and uplifting of IWOK.

Exhibit 1: Knowledge of Risks and Resilience in Program Development



Because the environmental scan, by design, was intended to build upon the findings of the literature review, it is not surprising that its findings are not in contrast to but, rather, in conversation with those of the literature review. The result of these extensive efforts was a recognition and understanding that culture matters, and programs infused with cultural resilience factors are critical to supporting the healing of the community for which they exist. The empowerment and promotion of cultural resilience factors in Tribal programs can enhance community healing and increase Tribal agency in developing solutions to the communities' challenges.

IWOK recognizes that emotional and spiritual experiences are important wells from which to gather knowledge, restore balance, and find guidance about how to live. For example, when gathering medicine for a ceremony, the act of gathering (including one's frame of mind) and what each plant or item "represents" all have meaning. The same can be said of dreams, visions, or certain important events, all of which are regarded as important founts from which to draw knowledge. The emphasis is less on cause and effect and more on how certain elements, events, and people connect in an ever-unfolding spiral through time and one's life journey. This way of learning and being incorporates the heart and not just the head.

Tribal Community Initiatives

Over the course of 7 years, the Center team recruited, supported, and worked collaboratively with five Tribal community initiatives:[ii]

- Txin Kaangux̂ Initiative, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island in St. Paul, Alaska
- Yéil Koowú Shaawát (Raven Tail Woman) Program,[iii] Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska in Juneau, Alaska
- Cowlitz Tribal Child Resilience Project, Cowlitz Indian Tribe in Longview, Washington
- Zuya Yuha O'mani Program, Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center on the Pine Ridge Reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota
- My Two Aunties, Tribal Family Services, Indian Health Council, Inc., The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians in Valley Center, California

ii Read the evaluation briefs in Appendix K to learn about each project's accomplishments.

iii Also known as the Tlingit and Haida Native Women's Counseling and Treatment Initiative.

Exhibit 2: Community Initiative Locations

Txin Kaanguˆx Initiative, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

In 2015, the Tribal Council of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island established the Txin Kaanguˆx (roughly translated, "your health and wellness") Initiative as a preventive and integrative medicine model. According the Txin Kaanguˆx Initiative 2015–2018 Strategic Plan, its:

- Goal is "to provide for the integration of Tribal Government programs, services, divisions, departments, and their employees that provide for the health, welfare and safety of our Tribal membership and community."
- Mission is to "empower our community to build strong and resilient families" through the idea of Ataqakun Anĝaĝilix, or "living together as one."

By re-centering health on each person's interconnectedness with their entire community (i.e., rather than focusing solely on individual well-being), the Initiative will help people see their value and role in keeping the entire community safe. The Initiative will decrease or prevent child maltreatment by:

- Providing integrated, holistic, non-punitive services to justice-involved families.
- Identifying families at risk of—and thereby preventing—child maltreatment.
- Engaging the community to bring awareness to services and to destigmatize the need for engaging in services.

The Initiative's integrated and broad service array attempts to cover all entry points for families at risk of child maltreatment, ideally before they become involved in the child welfare system. Community members can contact the main Tribal government office on St. Paul Island, where they would be referred to the services that might help them meet their current needs.

Yéil Koowú Shaawát Program, Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

The Yéil Koowú Shaawát (Raven Tail Woman) curriculum is a family-focused, culturally based counseling and treatment model that addresses domestic violence, child maltreatment, and intergenerational trauma and is facilitated through Tribal Family and Youth Services (TFYS). A fundamental aspect of this curriculum is healing trauma through group work and discussions with Native women, which, in turn, intervenes upon and prevents child maltreatment through a reclamation of Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural identity, and peer and kinship support systems. The group is composed of women who have all had previous (or have ongoing) contact with child welfare agencies.

The Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum model integrates Western therapies and Native spiritual healing practices. It takes a strength-based, holistic approach to healing, which emphasizes the importance of cultural resiliencies and protective factors. The curriculum was developed and refined over the past 15 years by clinician Amalia Monreal, LCSW, of the TFYS counseling program, and features three phases:

1. Phase I addresses anger, stress, and communication.
2. Phase II focuses on family of origin issues and on past/present relationships.
3. Phase III provides participants with a sexual abuse talking circle.

Cowlitz Tribal Child Resilience Project, Cowlitz Indian Tribe

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe Health and Human Services Department (HHS) and the Tribe's Culture Board and Health Board developed the Integrated Approach to Family Wellness model. Its primary aim is reducing child maltreatment and strengthening and maintaining Native family wellness by building organizational cohesion among prevention services. Families enter HHS through a "no-wrong-door" system of care, where service delivery is coordinated across the multiple service areas. The Integrated Approach to Family Wellness supports Native families and their children through primary, secondary, and tertiary means of prevention and aids staff in identifying those with risk factors for child maltreatment. It restores and enhances the strength of Native families by more comprehensively meeting the service needs of families and children.

The integrated model (1) promotes cultural resilience to address risks to children, healing intergenerational effects of historical trauma, and (2) helps Native families to reconnect with Tribal identity and traditional family wellness practices. Tribal elders defined success as Native families attending cultural events and finding their own niche in a wellness community. Families participating in the program feel engaged; proud of their heritage; loving, happy, and grateful; and a sense of family and belonging.

Zuya Yuha O'mani Program, Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center

The Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center (OLCJC) was founded in 1997 to advocate for and protect the rights of all Lakota children of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. By serving as the children's advocates and case managers, OLCJC protects children traumatized by severe physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and helps their spirits heal and soar. OLCJC also advocates for and protects the rights of Lakota children and conducts community education and outreach to increase awareness of child abuse and neglect. The Zuya Yuha O'mani program aims to reduce recurrence of child trauma and violence and, in doing so, reduce its long-term negative consequences among future generations. Through work with the child, immediate and extended family, service providers, and the community, OLCJC heals child victims and builds their resilience so that they can protect themselves and their future children from victimization.

OLCJC envisions returning children and families to Lakota ways that are selfless without vulgarity and violence, as embodied in the message, *Act Lakota, Feel Lakota, Be Lakota.*

OLCJC provides children re-enculturation to Lakota ways to heal the wounds of physical and sexual abuse. It takes a strengths-based, holistic approach to healing, which emphasizes the importance of cultural resilience and protective factors. OLCJC seeks to improve the lives of sacred little ones *(Wakanyeja)* and their families *(Tiwahe)* by helping them reclaim their cultural heritage and identity and by strengthening their self-esteem. Assisting with the healing process involves nurturing the holistic wellness of child victims—emotionally, physically, spiritually, and culturally.

My Two Aunties, The Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians

INDIAN HEALTH COUNCIL, INC.
EMPOWERING NATIVE WELLNESS

The My Two Aunties (M2A) model operates within the Tribal Family Services (TFS) department of the Indian Health Council, Inc. (IHC) in Southern California. The model's goal is to restore traditional lifeways and to prevent and intervene upon child maltreatment by strengthening families. The M2A model gets its name from a cornerstone of all AI/AN traditions: family. More specifically, "aunties" play the important role of teaching and reminding their families of the proper or appropriate ways to function, live in balance, and heal. Their role builds upon the strengths of family legacies, patterns, and kinship traditions that have endured since time immemorial. In their stories, passed on and gifted from elders, is the medicine that teaches listeners to be better people, families, and communities.

In the M2A program, the aunties teach cultural family life skills, support increased access to social services, and revitalize traditional child-rearing practices. They aim to improve family functioning, parenting skills, life skills, cultural resilience, cultural identity/sense of belonging, coping skills, ethnic pride, and connection with cultural resources and support (i.e., family, friends, community).

They also provide an integrated, holistic, and culturally driven approach to care to counter the stigma of social service involvement. Because of the stigma surrounding social services in the community, IHC believes that instances of child abuse and neglect, as well as the conditions that exacerbate these tragedies (e.g., parental substance use disorder, unhealthy parent relationships) are shrouded in secrecy. The vision of M2A is to restore the practice of parents and families asking each other and aunties for help when in need.

The image on the following page outlines this Guide's approach, designed to support researchers and evaluators working with Tribal communities in approaching the work in a non-colonized way and ensuring the priorities of relationships, reciprocity, and humility are present in the work.

The Journey of

Collaborative Evaluation With Tribal Communities

Build the Evidence Base of Tribal Child Welfare Knowledge and Practice

Tell the Story

Gather Information

Develop Tools

Design Evaluation

Plan for Legacy

Complete Pathway to Change

Build a Community of Inquirers

Assess Project Evaluability

Assess Community Readiness

Preparation for the Journey

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY

Gather Information for the Journey

The Center's mission was to collaborate with Tribal nations, communities, and community-based organizations to develop or enhance the evidence base of culturally congruent models of prevention and intervention services. Additionally, the CB charged the team with gathering and disseminating information about Tribally relevant practice models, interventions, and services that contribute substantively to child maltreatment prevention efforts and to family resilience.

We approached this mission with a decolonized lens. We recognize the importance of Tribal agency. When we work with communities, we center the community and its history, culture, and vision for the future. This is a Tribally driven community-based participatory approach.

One of the things we've learned over the years and something we hear across communities is "culture is medicine," meaning Native people have always used IWOK to provide a path forward and Tribal communities continue to reclaim, adapt, and revitalize their Indigenous ways in service of supporting efforts to prevent and intervene upon child maltreatment.

We meet Tribes where they are in their journey and approach the work with humility, as active listeners, knowing that communities and their people have the knowledge, experience, and resilience to achieve their vision for the future. We make it clear to our community partners that the work is *their* journey, and our role is to support them on that journey. In essence, they're at the wheel, and we're sitting next to them offering guidance and opportunities for bidirectional learning along the way.

Before embarking on the journey, researchers and evaluators need to pause to assess if your team has done the necessary "homework" to be informed and prepared to begin the process with an understanding of the context—both historical and in the field—and culturally responsive protocols. As we emphasize in this resource, however, learning will necessarily be incremental along the way. Build on what the field has learned to date by becoming familiar with key issues, literature, tools, and resources. The following are some tips for consideration prior to launching into the work.

DO NOT TREAT THE APPROACH AS LINEAR

You're familiar with research and evaluation models that follow a discrete series of steps to complete the process and to prepare output/products. Our suggestion is not to abandon this approach completely, but, rather, to consider it one of many tools in your toolbox and to try to avoid being rigid. Expect to encounter challenges that can seem to derail step-by-step processes.

Allow sufficient time and employ a flexible timeline to accommodate a collaborative and participatory approach. The collaborative and participatory aspects of the evaluation require significant time and coordination, so factor additional time and flexibility into evaluation timelines.

Read and Understand The Roadmap

The Roadmap identifies values and priorities that can foster trust and build the knowledge and skills of Tribes, their evaluation partners, and other stakeholders to conduct more useful and meaningful evaluations of child welfare programs.

Why the Roadmap Is Important

The Roadmap provides a plan that outlines the main actions or benchmarks needed to achieve a goal or destination. It's easier to get from point A to point B if you have turn-by-turn directions to follow instead of setting out just hoping you find the way. As stated in the Roadmap:

> *"Many Tribal communities feel the impact of intergenerational trauma as a result of the experiences of prior generations exposed to adverse and devastating events and conditions. Tribal communities can recount negative experiences that have created a distrust of research and evaluation. Evaluation activities have generally been imposed on Native communities by funding agencies that view evaluation from the dominant cultural paradigm. These approaches often failed to recognize the sovereignty of Tribes and to take advantage of long traditions of successful evaluation strategies that draw on Indigenous practice. Research was often invasive and offered little benefit to the community. In some cases, research actually harmed and exploited Native culture and ignored community rights."*
>
> *"To address these challenges with respect to child welfare, the Children's Bureau formed a workgroup comprising representatives from Tribal child welfare programs, evaluators, university researchers, technical assistance providers, and federal program partners. The workgroup developed this Roadmap for Co-Creating Collaborative and Effective Evaluation to Improve Tribal Child Welfare Programs. This tool can be used to create a shared vision for the future of Tribal child welfare evaluation and provide a common language for Tribal communities and evaluators as they improve evaluation practice."* [4]

Using the Roadmap

The team aimed to conduct research and to support evaluations that used Indigenous knowledge and practices and moved beyond standard Western methods. This approach aligned with the Center's overall mission of using an Indigenous lens to partner with and support project sites. To ensure that the evaluation was culturally meaningful, the evaluation team drew on the key values and best practices outlined in the Roadmap. These values and best practices included:

- Incorporating and using IWOK to shape and answer key research questions and to tell the story of the projects, recognizing and honoring the wisdom and expertise of the community members and leaders
- Integrating a strengths- and community-based participatory approach to evaluation that actively engaged collaboratively with the selected communities in a meaningful way to gather information and to make meaning of the materials gathered
- Presenting with cultural humility and being culturally responsive through flexibility and sensitivity to changing needs and constraints of projects when needed
- Ensuring that evaluation goals and methods were grounded in cultural contexts while respecting and honoring Tribal sovereignty.

Gain Experience Conducting Community-Based Participatory Research

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) actively involves everyone affected by the research outcomes in every step of the process. This includes among others, community members, researchers, and program staff.

Researchers working in Indian Country must approach Tribal nations with humility, cultural competence, and knowledge of Indigenous research norms and methods. They can start by studying available resources and taking training courses on CBPR and Indigenous research practices. Additionally, researchers should seek guidance from Native people who have experience conducting research with Tribal communities.

Increase Awareness of the History of Harms Caused by Western Research in Native Communities

For years, AI/AN communities frequently suffered as the result of Western studies due to:

- **Misuse and Exploitation Of Knowledge.** Often this is the result of not acknowledging community members sharing personal time reviewing documents; providing cultural advisement; or giving feedback on instruments, articles, tools, and products. Offering appropriate acknowledgement in the form of tangible and intangible gifts should not be considered as compensation, but an offering in honor of and respect for IWOK. Another option is leaving a gift of knowledge with a local Tribal member (e.g., teaching them how to conduct data collection, develop a culturally appropriate tool, or analyze data).
- **Ethical Issues and Lack of Consent.** In the past, numerous research projects were initiated without the participants' informed consent. In several instances, researchers have not obtained the required consent or adequately disclosed the possible consequences of the research.
- **Data Misuse.** The information gathered may occasionally be used in ways that harm the community through the reinforcement of negative stereotypes or exploitation of resources.
- **Historical Trauma.** As stated earlier, the experiences of earlier generations subjected to unfavorable and terrible circumstances and events left many Tribal societies suffering from the impact of intergenerational trauma. Tribal communities can recount negative experiences that created a distrust of research and evaluation. Native communities are aware of this history, which tends to cause additional trauma and mistrust of current research activities.

Therefore, researchers have a responsibility to learn about the history of harms caused by Western research.

Review and Understand Literature on Indigenous Approaches to Evaluation

Intergenerational and historical trauma are concepts that describe the trauma inflicted on groups sharing an ethnic or national background.[5,6] Under the umbrella of these traumas are several well-established and commonly cited risk factors for child maltreatment among AI/AN populations, including perceived discrimination, parental/familial financial strain, parental mental health and substance use issues, familial adverse childhood events, chronic illness, and unintentional injuries.[7,8,9,10] Adding to their complexity is the high degree of association and inter-relatedness among these risk factors, limiting our ability to draw causal connections. For example, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, issues of unemployment, substance use, homelessness, rape, and child abuse are everyday challenges. Until a few years ago, the reservation only had 8 officers to respond to the needs of its population of approximately 17,000 residents. This example illustrates the need for intervention and prevention efforts in Indian Country that consider multiple layers of ecology, including family, community, political, and legal spheres. If intergenerational and historical trauma are the primary risk factors of child maltreatment in Indian Country, protective factors for this population must encapsulate the ways in which AI/AN people approach and respond to adversity in healthy ways. In particular, cultural continuity is often situated as an overarching framework for examining Native resilience, wellness, and well-being. Identification with, participation in, and understanding of one's culture, especially among AI/AN populations, is believed to provide a buffering effect against the vast majority of social ills facing Native communities today, particularly child maltreatment.[11,12,13,14]

Spirituality and connectedness are particularly important for AI/AN youth,[15] as are the institutions of community and family, especially extended family.[16] There is growing evidence that Native youth who are culturally and spiritually engaged are more resilient than their peers.[17,18] Research has also found that Indigenous caregivers find traditional ceremonies (e.g., sweat lodges, prayers) more effective than some standard Western health treatment protocols.[19] The integration of traditional healing practices into prevention and treatment for Native children and youth is, therefore, essential. According to Bassett, Tsosie, and Nannauck (2021), "Indigenous means of treatment through culture may include any or all of the following: language, traditional foods, ceremonies, traditional values, spiritual beliefs, history, stories, songs, traditional plants and canoe journeys."[20]

Numerous child welfare practices exist throughout Tribal communities. Their structural features, however, sometimes prevent the programs from being reviewed or supported in the literature, primarily due to their not possessing enough information about their nature and effectiveness. Though these community practices may have been used successfully cross-generationally, even for centuries, they nonetheless may not have produced the kind of documentary paper trail that positions them for appearing in a literature review. This is often due to the historically colonialized approach to telling the story of the programs' effectiveness in preventing or intervening in child maltreatment.

Standard approaches to research generally, and environmental scans more specifically, often have the goal of harvesting gaps, deficits, or weaknesses as the primary objective. Though not an inherently inferior approach, this approach does not acknowledge the existing sociocultural resources within Indigenous communities, whose strengths and successes must also be carefully examined if there is any hope for bettering the situation of Native children and families.

Learn About and Understand the Power of IWOK

The Center uses community-based and -collaborative evaluation models compatible with IWOK to build knowledge and to tell the story of the projects. Through program development and evaluation assistance, the Center supports culturally grounded and Tribally created child and family service programs built upon Native philosophies, community- and practice-based evidence, behavioral norms, relationships, and attributes as part of culturally engaged and congruent community wellness. Continuously engaging with Tribal partners in a participatory manner by building relationships, knowledge, and skills through evaluation activities, this approach to project evaluations allows us to:

- **Ease concerns caused by the history of negative research experiences in Indian Country.** The history of deficit-based research across Tribal communities has seen outside researchers impose Western frameworks, interpret data, and disseminate findings without including Tribal input, understanding and addressing Tribal needs, or creating positive social change. We prioritize collaborative and participatory engagement with Tribes throughout the evaluation process to gain trust and to ensure that findings will provide useful tools for the community and reflect the cultural context in which they are implemented.
- **Allow sufficient time and employ a flexible timeline.** This helps accommodate our collaborative and participatory approach, which relies on positive relationships between the Center team members and the community. These aspects of the evaluation require both significant time and coordination and an evaluation timeline that accounts for these aspects.
- **Use multiple sources of data and information.** This is necessary to overcome limitations of administrative data that may vary in availability and quality. Many Tribes may not have the resources for robust management information systems that are designed to track data regarding service delivery and participant outcomes. Even if Tribes have child welfare data systems, the systems may not have the necessary tracking and reporting capacity or a scope that includes all the relevant information (e.g., about prevention programs). Additionally, the type of information entered into an information system may not actually tell the story of the project or the outcomes of the intervention. To address this potential issue, and in alignment with the framework of IWOK, the Center team focused on the use of culturally grounded storytelling for case studies, which provided the opportunity for high-quality, Tribally focused collection of information on sensitive topics.

Recognize, Honor, and Understand the Importance of Tribal Sovereignty

Tribes are sovereign nations, many of which are recognized formally by the United States. At an abstract level, as the National Congress of American Indians discusses, the "essence of tribal sovereignty is the ability to govern and to protect and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of tribal citizens within tribal territory."[21] "In addition, Native peoples and governments have inherent rights and a political relationship with the U.S. Government that does not derive from race or ethnicity….Tribal citizens are citizens of three sovereigns: their Tribal nations, the United States, and the state in which they reside."[22] These retained rights of Tribes provide absolute self-determination to make decisions related to the health and well-being of their citizens.

Data Sovereignty

Data sovereignty is the right of Tribes to oversee and manage any data related to their citizens. This includes whether research will be allowed (often decided through a Tribal Research Review Board or Tribal Council decision), as well as the design of data collection methods, actual data collection, data review and interpretation, storing and accessing data, data ownership, and its dissemination. Data sovereignty matters because when data are shared with researchers outside of the original research project team, how those data are used and interpreted is difficult to control. Publications which take the data out of context may make generalizations about AI/AN communities that are not true or are even stigmatizing to the community. As a result, it is important that AI/AN communities look carefully at the issue of data sharing when developing research agreements and at the sources of funding, as accepting federal grants may obligate AI/AN communities to make data about their communities publicly available.[23]

Teaming Agreements

In honor and recognition of Tribal sovereignty and ownership over the materials developed during our collaborative work together, the Center worked with each project to develop a teaming agreement which demonstrated our commitment to honor the principles of data sovereignty and Tribally driven participatory research and evaluation. The agreement is a negotiated process and outlines the responsibilities of the evaluator and the project regarding the work together. The success of each project depended on the close relationship and partnership between the Center and the community. The teaming agreement was a commitment by the Center to ensure the Tribal community organization or Tribe would retain and respect confidentiality of all materials specific to data management. As a team, we recognized the right of the communities to exercise complete authority and ownership over the raw data files. The Tribe has the right to decide the content of the information collected and who has access to it. Due to the individuality of each community we worked with, each teaming agreement had some differences in the details. Appendix B is a sample template of the agreement used with the projects.

Develop New Terms of Art

As the Center's work developed, we started using the following terms as specialized terms of art or shorthand for longer expressions that we didn't want to keep repeating—especially throughout the interminable video meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to serving as a shorthand, these terms and concepts helped the Center move away from Western approaches to our activities and toward more culturally responsive ones that center the communities' we were working with. In much the same way that we understand that words matter in, e.g., the context of stigma and substance use disorder, we understood that many of the words we used at the outset are bound to histories of trauma and so were to be avoided. In addition, the use of these terms rather than their Western analogues served to remind us that we were not doing "business as usual"; instead, we needed to be intentional about doing this work, and using these terms signaled to us and others to heed the context and to proceed accordingly (See Appendix C).

WORDS MATTER: INFORMATION GATHERING

Where traditional Western approaches to research and evaluation address themselves to "data collection," we talk in terms of "information gathering" for several reasons:

- The history of settler research in Indian Country is replete with troubling and unethical research practices; sadly, this is not merely historical, but includes at least some of the contemporary context. For better or worse, the use of the expression "data collection" is closely associated with those practices, and if we could take small steps to avoid contributing to this trauma while doing our work, we thought we should.
- In traditional Western research paradigms, there's often a distinction made between "data" and "information". "Data" typically refers to raw, unprocessed facts, especially quantitative measurements. "Information", on the other hand, is understood as data that has been analyzed and contextualized to provide meaning. However, when working with Indigenous frameworks and engaging with IWOK, this terminology can be problematic and potentially harmful. The term "data collection" may evoke memories of historical trauma, where Native knowledge and cultural artifacts were often extracted without consent or respect. In our work, we prioritized a holistic understanding of program efficacy. This approach involved deep, meaningful conversations with elders and other knowledge keepers. To honor the depth and significance of these interactions, we chose to frame our process as "information gathering" rather than "data collection". This shift in terminology served multiple purposes:
  - » It avoided language that could trigger negative associations with past exploitation.
  - » It acknowledges the inherent value and completeness of the knowledge shared by community members.
  - » It recognized that our role as researchers was not to "collect" something raw or unprocessed, but rather to gather and synthesize existing wisdom and insights.
  - » It conveyed respect for the depth and complexity of Indigenous knowledge systems.
  - » It aligned our research approach more closely with Indigenous worldviews and methodologies.
- By framing our work as "information gathering", we conveyed to the communities we collaborated with that we recognized the richness of their knowledge. Our goal was to bring together this collective wisdom, synthesize it respectfully, and then share our findings back with the community in a way that could benefit all.

Learn About the Community's History and Context

Learning about the unique history of the community, its experiences with research and evaluation (good and bad), and any cultural protocols (formal and informal) surrounding the planning and conduct of research activities is imperative. At present, there are 574 federally recognized Tribal nations in the United States, with diverse languages, histories, cultures, and practices.[24] To the extent possible, researchers should immerse themselves in the cultural protocols, belief systems, and lifeways of the AI/AN community they plan to work with. This involves learning about each community's history, spiritual practices, seasonal rhythms, and traditional names. Through this process, researchers gain deeper insights into the culture, language, and history of the specific community. Given the diversity among Indigenous peoples, researchers should avoid generalizing based on previous collaborations and instead approach each community as unique.

But how to do this? Begin with your own web research; numerous resources and training courses about doing research with Indigenous people and communities are available that can provide valuable insight. Many Tribes have websites, newsletters, and other sources of information. As discussed in other portions of this document, you may wish to seek guidance from Indigenous people with lived experience and/or engage with a consultant with expertise on the traditions of specific communities.

Building a rapport with elders, Tribal leaders, culture bearers, and other community members is also key. As you develop a relationship with a community, don't be afraid to ask for guidance, and certainly be honest and humble about what you don't know. Because you've symbolically read this "travel guide" for visiting another nation doesn't mean you know what it's like to live as a member of that nation. These processes take time.

Prepare Yourself for the Journey

Cultivate Genuine Partnerships in the Community

Cultivating genuine partnerships with the Tribal organizations and communities you work with helps bridge intercultural gaps, promote bidirectional learning, and foster a sense of trust, resulting in better evidence gathering with more authentic and representative information about programs. Developing partnerships like these involves building trust and mutually beneficial and enriching relationships—the kind built through genuine conversation and shared experience.

As discussed earlier, a key challenge of implementing Western-style evaluations in Indigenous communities is the most fundamental: gathering information. The history of Western research in Indian Country is filled with cautionary tales and overcoming that context—current as much as historical—which requires building relationships with the community. If you have a genuine partnership, you will be able to get buy-in and trust from the community, which opens up the possibility of getting richer, more candid responses about the program's story than from more formal approaches. In addition, developing these partnerships provides important inroads to sustainability and capacity building as it fosters the community's ability to tell its own story; the partnership can help empower the community to ask its own questions and to take the lead on evaluation efforts.

Understand Reciprocity

In the context of research and evaluation, reciprocity is the balance, equilibrium, or congruence that exists between researchers and research participants. The practice of Western research in Native communities has been aptly characterized as a "colonizing enterprise." Native peoples and communities have long observed outside researchers exporting raw data from a community for the purpose of "processing" it into manufactured goods (e.g., journal articles, books) and assuming unlimited and unrestricted access to and ownership of that data. Not only is this practice a legal infringement on Tribal sovereignty (as described previously), but it also is at odds with the concept of reciprocity. A commitment to reciprocity throughout the entire research journey is crucial when engaging with Native communities. Below, we identified some key lessons to help researchers and Tribal communities start thinking about how to build reciprocal relationships.

RECIPROCITY IS NOT MERELY TRANSACTIONAL IN NATURE

- Offering incentives to research participants or appropriately compensating local community and/or organizational partners that may co-lead participatory research projects are good ways of carrying out reciprocal and respectful research relationships. But reciprocity is not limited to issues of financial equity. "Giving back" can take any number of different forms.
- Tribes may have their own internal cultural protocols (e.g., the Cree practice of making an offering of tobacco as a gift symbolizing respect and reciprocity.)
- Technical skills, capacity building, and mentorship are also examples of human capital that researchers should be prepared to leave with Native communities, so that when the researchers are gone, someone in the community holds the knowledge of that skill.

Researchers should always ask themselves: What am I bringing with, taking from, and leaving to the community? Consultation with the community (e.g., elders, Tribal Council) is a good way to begin this conversation. Identification of a key Tribal contact is another inroad to ensure you don't misstep when working with Tribal communities. A key Tribal contact will often know the community and its people, services and programs, cultural and spiritual people, and history.

Demonstrate Vulnerability

All of the lessons from our work highlight the importance of showing up authentically in your full humanity. This meant being honest about our lives and sharing them openly in our work with partners. It can be easy to develop a professional "script" to guide interactions, putting on the mantle of your role as researcher or evaluator. When you lead with this role and act as if that role is the only part of you that needs to be present when you do your work, you are not being fully authentic, which limits relationship building. Similarly, it can be easy to think of being in a community in person and sharing the community's space as less important than the selection of research tools and models or that one location is more-or-less like another. Tools and models matter, but so, too, does being on the ground. Our experience is that the most successful interactions were when we brought our true selves, engaged in relationship development, and fully embraced the experience.

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE ROLE OF TRUST AND EMPATHY IN COMMUNICATION

Empathetic Communication. This requires being able to put the thoughts you want to convey in terms that resonate with your audience. That might mean not using the words you typically do; you, after all, are not your audience. Understanding your audience requires listening empathetically when they speak and letting them tell you their stories. Empathy must be real, and building trust takes time, commitment, and steadiness. Like in all relationships, it can be the small kindnesses that have a large impact.

Communication Through Storytelling. Oral tradition remains an essential part of most Tribal communities, and storytelling is sometimes an indirect way of imparting information and life lessons. When asking questions in Tribal communities, it is important to be sensitive to this form of communication. Sometimes a seemingly mundane question could spark a long story or response; in these moments, be open to listening and do not interrupt. They will respond well to slower talk, more pausing, sharing information, and storytelling.

Be Prepared to Fail Forward

Relationship-based work like this requires flexibility in planning that will allow you to adjust your methods to the opportunities and challenges that arise, as well as to the community's needs and ability to provide information. While you can consider methods and develop a plan for the work, you can't

expect to fully design your approach ahead of time. Instead, you must come prepared to fail forward through iteration, revision, and even revisiting study questions. In sum, begin the work with the expectation that you will make mistakes and your initial plans will need revision. Failing forward means you'll be prepared to learn from your mistakes and to develop solutions without defensiveness, which will only hinder the work. By demonstrating vulnerability and humility during these missteps, you can build relationships, trust, and rapport with your partners, which will strengthen the work.

Understand Relationality

For Indigenous people, the important values and practices are the familial, collective, group, and community dynamics and interdependent relationships that form the basis of personal and professional identity. This is unlike the values and traits of individualism, independence, and autonomy that are the foundational ideologies and practices of non-Indigenous people in North America. Relationships with and connections to family, neighbors, ancestors, future generations, the land and environment, and the spiritual world and cosmos collectively construct the concept of relationality for Indigenous people.

Researchers working with AI/AN peoples and communities must understand that relationships and accountability to those relationships are the lynchpin of the entire research (or evaluation) process. Attention to relationality must be paid at the beginning, for the duration, and at conclusion of any research effort in Indian Country. Issues of research ethics, worldview, and methodology are entirely wrapped up in notions of relationship. As articulated by Cree scholar Shawn Wilson, "[R]elationships do not merely shape reality; they are reality."[25]

Relationality also has profound implications for the way researchers and evaluators engage with and make meaning out of data. As a consequence, specific variables or concepts may be overanalyzed to the exclusion of others. This may produce findings and conclusions devoid of context and improperly generalized, which lead to the findings being construed as global truths applicable to other Indigenous communities.

APOLOGIZE AND ASK FOR HELP

As an outsider in the community, you are not the expert for the work. Recognizing the community is the expert is critical to success. When researchers or evaluators lead projects from outside the community, they may find themselves in a position where they have made a mistake or an action that was offensive. As a result, they need to apologize for the actions. Apologizing to a Tribe for a mistake demands a profound acknowledgment of responsibility, cultural sensitivity, and commitment to repairing the relationship. Understanding the significance of sincere apologies and taking ownership of errors is pivotal when working with Tribes as it cultivates mutual respect, fosters trust, and promotes genuine collaboration based on shared values and understanding.

When you make a mistake, and everyone makes mistakes at some point, nothing excessive needs to be said other than making it known that you made a mistake by simply saying "I made a mistake" and then make necessary corrections as appropriate.

First and foremost, when extending an apology to a Tribe, it's crucial to recognize the unique cultural context and historical experiences that shape its identity and worldview. Tribes often have distinct traditions, languages, and sacred practices that hold deep significance within their community. Acknowledging and respecting these cultural nuances demonstrates an understanding of the Tribe's heritage and an appreciation for its way of life. Moreover, taking ownership of a mistake shows integrity and accountability—fundamental principles in building meaningful relationships with Tribes. Accepting responsibility for one's actions validates the Tribe's experiences, affirming the community's right to be heard and respected. This acknowledgment of wrongdoing lays the foundation for open dialogue and constructive engagement, paving the way for genuine reconciliation and collaboration.

Researchers and evaluators who wish to work with AI/AN peoples and communities must realize that building a relationship with the Tribal community based on trust and authenticity needs to happen prior to beginning any work. As discussed earlier, they need to learn about the community's unique history, its experiences with research and evaluation, and any cultural protocols informing the planning and conduct of research activities, as well as develop rapport with elders, Tribal leaders, culture bearers, and other community members.

Researchers and evaluators entering Indigenous communities have a moral and ethical obligation for relational accountability. One way of accomplishing this is for Tribal communities and researchers to jointly host meaning-making sessions with research participants, key stakeholders, and/or the community at large once data collection and analysis are complete. These forums provide an opportunity for researchers to transparently share results and to explain their process for interpreting findings to the community, while also empowering the community to provide its input, feedback, and recommended corrections. Such practice increases both the researchers' interpretive validity of research and the uptake and use of research findings by the community—thereby fulfilling obligations of reciprocity.

Show Up as Your Whole Selves

Evaluators who can be authentically present with their community partners build connections with people, organizations, and communities that elicit the best knowledge and outcomes. For many Native communities, non-Indigenous people in North America's separation between their work selves and personal lives is not recognized or seen as an unproductive and unnecessary one. In truth, this is a cultural attribute that these communities learned to employ through the socialization processes we've experienced. Visualize having a mask that you wear in certain situations, a person you present to the world. Doing this work effectively requires humility, vulnerability, and sharing who we are underneath our professional masks. To build trust with Native communities, you will have greater success if you present your whole self. This is not only about the division between professional and private lives but about demonstrating humility, engaging openly, and building the types of relationships that can't easily be compartmentalized into professional or personal.

By presenting our whole selves, we demonstrate a willingness to share and learn from one another in a way that addresses power imbalances and invites a common sense of humanity/purpose. For many of us, being vulnerable brings discomfort, and it is important to sit with the discomfort rather than turn away from or suppress it. Some of the stories here reflect the kinds of emotional moments that don't typically appear in research methods or statements of lessons learned. However, the discomfort and vulnerability were critical to the process, deeply understanding the projects, and the development of genuine relationships.

Approach With Humility

Humility is a crucial quality for professionals working with Tribes, as it fosters respect, trust, and collaboration. Recognizing and valuing the unique cultural, historical, and social contexts of Tribal communities is essential for effective and meaningful engagement. Tribes have rich cultural heritages and longstanding traditions. Approaching Tribal communities with humility means acknowledging and respecting the unique traditions, languages, customs, and cultural attributes of each Tribe and Tribal community. It involves recognizing that Tribes are sovereign entities with their own governance structures, laws, and ways of life. Professionals must understand that they are guests in these communities and should defer to Tribal leadership and protocols. This is where key Tribal contacts become invaluable. This respect is foundational to building trust and to fostering positive relationships.

Education and Awareness. Many Tribes have experienced historical trauma due to colonization, forced relocation, and other injustices. Humility requires professionals to educate themselves about this history and its ongoing impact on Tribal communities. It involves recognizing past wrongs and understanding how these legacies affect present-day issues. This awareness helps professionals approach their work with sensitivity and empathy, avoiding actions that could inadvertently perpetuate harm or disrespect. Trust is a cornerstone of effective collaboration with Tribes. Humility facilitates trust-building by demonstrating that professionals are open to learning and genuinely value the knowledge and perspectives of Tribal members. It involves listening more than speaking, asking questions rather than making assumptions, and being willing to adjust one's approach based on feedback from the community. This collaborative spirit ensures that initiatives are co-created with Tribes, leading to more sustainable and culturally appropriate outcomes.

Cultural competence is the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures. Humility is a key component of cultural competence, as it involves recognizing the limitations of one's own knowledge and being open to learning from others. Professionals working with Tribes must be willing to continually educate themselves about Tribal cultures and be open to different ways of thinking and doing. This ongoing learning process helps avoid misunderstandings and fosters more respectful and effective interactions.

Support of Self-Determination. Humility supports the principle of self-determination (i.e., the right of Tribes to make their own decisions and to control their own futures). Professionals must recognize that Tribes are best positioned to identify their own needs and solutions. Humility involves stepping back and allowing them to take the lead, offering support and expertise as requested rather than imposing external agendas. This approach empowers Tribal communities and respects their autonomy.

Self-Reflection. Humility involves self-reflection and an awareness of one's own strengths, challenges, biases, and assumptions. Professionals must be willing to critically examine their own practices and attitudes, seeking feedback from Tribal members and being open to change. This reflection is crucial for personal and professional growth, ensuring that one's work is respectful, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and perspectives of Tribal communities.

Humility fosters respect, trust, and collaboration; acknowledges historical contexts; enhances cultural competence; supports self-determination; and encourages reflection. By approaching their work with humility, professionals can build meaningful, sustainable relationships with Tribal communities, leading to more effective and culturally appropriate outcomes.

Researchers working in Indian Country have a responsibility to enter a Tribal nation with humility, cultural competence, and knowledge of Indigenous research norms and methods. As this Guide notes throughout, numerous resources and training courses about doing research with Indigenous people and communities that can provide valuable insight are available. Researchers might also seek guidance from Indigenous people with lived experience doing research in Indigenous communities.

Some steps to consider include:

- **Let the staff know if you are unfamiliar with their culture.** This may not be necessary in every situation, but if you feel uncomfortable or uncertain about how to act, you might say something like, "I'm new to working with Tribal communities. I want to be respectful, so please let me know if any of my actions seem inappropriate." Take time to answer any questions they have and address any concerns.

- **Be aware of differing notions of time.** Be open to the premise that things happen when they are supposed to happen, rather than at exact junctures in time. DON'T RUSH. You will have an agenda and a timeframe to follow. However, time and being "on time" are cultural concepts. Don't impose your will or cultural lens when it comes to time. When working in a Tribal community, budget time for late arrivals and prepare for extended timelines. Western society's approach to time is focused on certain points, intervals, or specific times. Some Native concepts of time are circular or cyclical and not linear (i.e., they are embedded in stories and culture passed down through generations). Also, Tribal child welfare staff wear multiple hats; they may be preparing travel for staff 1 minute and receiving calls about child abuse and neglect the next. So, when they say it's on my list of to do's, they mean it.

- **Recognize that in some communities, direct eye contact may be considered rude and disrespectful.** This is especially true with elders. Staff might look at their hands or may only look indirectly at your eyes. If you notice that program staff, parents, or children are not making eye contact, this does not mean that they are not listening or paying attention—they are showing respect. Follow their lead and look in their direction but not directly into their eyes. However, a community member who's looking down or clearly ignoring you, may be showing disagreement or displeasure. Again, careful observation is key to avoiding misunderstanding.

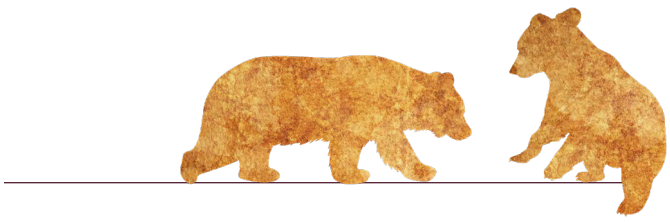
- **Be mindful of your own physical presence.** Differences in height, weight, physical abilities, etc., all affect power dynamics in conversations. Be mindful of this when engaging with people, especially elders. For example, if you are 6'2" and speaking with a Tribal elder who is 5', be mindful of that dynamic. Your physical appearance may be intimidating, so wait for the elder to approach you. Let the interviewee decide the "staging" of the conversation (e.g., let them choose where to sit first, and ask them, "is it ok if I sit here?").[26]

SELF-REFLECTION AND CULTURAL HUMILITY

Prior to going onsite, researchers and evaluators should understand where they stand in terms of cultural humility and in how their level of humility may become evident in the work. Self-assessment tools have been developed to help practitioners understand and address their own cultural biases. Your team may find it helpful to complete one of these assessments at the outset of your research or evaluation project. There are many tools to choose from including the following two examples:

1. Cultural Humility Self-Reflection Tool for School Staff, School Mental Health Ontario
2. Building Bridges: Resources to Center Cultural Humility Toolkit, Racial Equity, Advocacy, and Community Health (REACH) Alliance

The Center team entered its work with humility and the understanding that we, too, are learners and willing to allow ourselves to be touched and changed by the process. We aspired to approach these evaluation projects with a good heart, with a good mind, and with accountability and intention to honor the sacred stories that serve as the foundation of this report.



Understand Bidirectional Learning

Another way that evaluators partnering with Indigenous communities may need to reorient themselves is by entering the work with humility and the understanding that they, too, are learners in this partnership. Both the evaluation team and the community bring expertise and experience to the work, and being intentional about working with the Indigenous community and its programs can expand everyone's skills and knowledge.

IWOK recognizes the importance of emotional and spiritual experiences. The emphasis is less on cause and effect and more on how certain elements, events, and people connect in an ever-unfolding spiral through time and one's life journey. This way of learning and being incorporates the heart and not just the head.

Our relationship to the programs was not limited to conducting an evaluation. The Center worked intentionally with the Indigenous community and Tribal program, co-creating tools and resources to document its program's model and successes so that other AI/AN child welfare organizations could adapt and implement in their own Tribal settings.

These bidirectional effects were not limited to learning about culture or programs; it included healing, appropriately enough given the role of culture as healing and that promoting a community's health promotes the health of people in that community.

Communicate Effectively and Listen Actively

Be a good listener. This means listen first, talk second, and do not interrupt. Depending on the region, you may need to wait longer than you are accustomed to in order to be sure the other person is finished speaking. Become familiar with local communication styles and modify yours as needed. For example, you might notice that there are longer pauses between sentences. Some Tribal communities regard loud and fast speech as disrespectful.

TIP

Introduce yourself fully and wholistically. Talk about who you are, your family, where you are from, and where you currently live. If you are Native, talk about the nation to which you belong.

Your main job is to listen and learn from the community. You may politely ask if you can record the conversation so that you can focus on the conversation without having to take notes. If your request is denied, you may ask if you can take written notes. Be aware of the kind of notes you're taking. Laptops may present a physical barrier to communication. Rapid typing sounds from a laptop may be distracting or worrisome; consider using pen and paper. If you need to use a laptop, sit so everyone can see your screen. Do not use a phone for taking notes; you may appear to be ignoring the speaker. This is where taking simultaneous field notes is important.

Before asking any questions, take time upon arrival to have a short meet and greet. Start by offering a gift. Remember that because of the damaging history of research in Tribal communities, program staff might feel wary or nervous at your presence.

While on site, take the time to recognize the unique strengths of that community; it will pave the way for good relations in the future. In your interactions with the community, focus on the positive and strengths rather than the negative or criticisms.

Expect Change: Plan for Barriers, Staff Turnover, and Extended Timelines

As the Center team, we recognized that we and our Tribal partners would face inevitable challenges, such as:

- **Succession Planning.** This is key to strategic initiatives. Therefore, all program staff should be (1) educated on Tribal-wide and departmental policies and procedures and (2) informed of decisions that affect employment or service delivery. This assists with professional development and protects the employer in the event of staff turnover.
- **Staff Turnover.** For projects operating over multiple years, it's reasonable to expect staff changes within your organization, partners, and the health and social services departments of your partner Tribes. You may wish to learn about the Tribe's governance to understand timeframes for elections and potentially resulting changes to Tribal Council and other leadership positions; changes in Tribal leadership can lead to changes in priorities and focus areas that affect the project.
- **Challenges to Provision of Direct Services.** These organizations' foremost purpose is providing direct services to the people of their communities. Emergencies, such as the passing of a cherished elder, will often require the attention of all staff, from frontline to leadership. This is heightened in rural communities and those with limited resources and capacity. As these staff navigate uncertain waters, they may need to miss scheduled meetings and to reduce contact with the research and evaluation project. Respect for cultural protocols becomes a priority during these challenging times.

THE APPROACH

Above we've provided suggested steps to prepare for your project and shared tips to know before getting started. Now you begin the journey by focusing on establishing trust-based partnerships. We'll continue to recommend key principles to be mindful of. This guidance intersects with the resources and literature available in child welfare and many fields about building partnerships, including intersectoral partnerships among those fields, and engaging effectively with community-based organizations. (See Resources and References as a starting point). That information will be useful to understand. The guidance here complements that foundation to focus on our learnings from collaboration with Tribes and the specific considerations for that work.

Assess Community Readiness

Assessing readiness helps you choose strategies that are likely to succeed and promotes community ownership of the project. A Community Readiness Model (CRM) is used to assess the degree of a communities' preparation to take on and champion a project. As guided by the CRM, readiness:

- May vary across the dimensions examined and have different results based on different segments of the community
- Provides knowledge to inform the development of success strategies and interventions for implementation
- Is issue specific—communities may be in a higher level of readiness for one type of a project than for another type

The CRM has many facets that support the community, program, and evaluation. It:

- **Can be helpful to a community addressing barriers to improving child maltreatment prevention and intervention efforts at many levels.** The model conserves valuable resources (e.g., time, money) by guiding the selection of strategies most likely to be successful and is an efficient, inexpensive, and easy-to-use tool. The assessment promotes community recognition and ownership of issues related to child maltreatment and, because of strong community ownership, helps to ensure that community strategies are culturally congruent and sustainable. Use of a community readiness tool further encourages the use of local experts and resources instead of reliance on outside experts and supports the community in creating a vision for healthy change.
- **Allows for communities to define issues and strategies in their own contexts and builds cooperation among systems and individuals.** Readiness assessments allow a community to understand how prepared it is to undertake a task or model of intervention and can improve implementation by highlighting where to begin the work. Through community readiness, the facilitators of change encourage community investment in issues related to child maltreatment and awareness.

Programs can use the results of the assessment to guide complex processes of change to support community development. However, efforts that are too ambitious are likely to fail because community members will not be ready or able to respond. When the issue is complex (e.g., prevention or intervention of child maltreatment) and includes possible barriers, a model to assess readiness is critical to identifying the community of focus and to measuring the readiness to implement the project. Through this process, communities can identify resistance areas to support community plan development to prepare for implementation.

- **Can help a community to define the next steps on the path to wellness.** Understanding this level of spiritual and strategic readiness is important in setting the stage for successful growth and resilience. Developing a work plan to support the implementation of the intervention that is inclusive of addressing the community's level of readiness is essential for success.

The process of community change can be complex and challenging, and an instrument such as the CRM offers tools to measure a community's readiness for change and to develop stage-appropriate change strategies. The CRM is a model for community change that integrates a community's culture, resources, and level of readiness to address child maltreatment more effectively.

Chosen due to its demonstrated usefulness for working with Tribal communities, the Center used a community readiness assessment tool adapted from materials from the Tri-Ethnic Center for Prevention Research's assessment, Community Readiness for Community Change (Colorado State University), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Tribal Training and Technical Assistance Center's Community Readiness Manual on Suicide Prevention in Native Communities. We changed the questions in the original version of the assessment to gear the assessment toward child maltreatment prevention and intervention efforts.

This adapted CRM includes scoring dimensions of readiness, following a dedicated effort to gather information and feedback from the community. The tool served as an integral part of the work in supporting and developing communities and in relationship building through authentic conversations and information gathering.

The community readiness assessment uses key respondent interviews in the community to measure the extent to which a community is prepared to take action on an issue (See Appendix D). The findings from the interviews are scored and used to match an intervention to the community's level of readiness to move forward on the issue. The assessment measures address readiness in six areas:

1. Existing Community Efforts
2. Community Knowledge of the Efforts
3. Leadership
4. Community Climate
5. Community Knowledge About the Issue
6. Resources Related to the Issue

Using the assessment's guide, project teams tally the results (See Exhibit 3).

The model includes opportunities to record community strengths, conditions or concerns, and resources along a continuum of readiness, from a community having no awareness of the issue or project to having a high level of community ownership. The assessment process reflects on areas of both strength and that need additional work, further identifying resources that can support the project.

The CRM results do not include a pass/fail assessment tool. They should be understood as a point-in-time assessment of areas to further address prior to implementation of the program. Failure to fully address the dimensions with the low score (i.e., needing additional focus) may lead to an implemented project that does not yield the intended results.

Exhibit 3: Example of a Summary of Stages of Readiness

Existing Community Efforts	**Stages 6/7, Initiation/Stabilization:** Efforts (programs or activities) have been running for at least 4 years or more.
Community Knowledge of Efforts	**Stage 5, Preparation:** Members of the community have basic knowledge about local efforts (e.g., their purpose).
Leadership	**Stages 5/6, Preparation/Initiation:** Leaders are active and supportive of implementation efforts.
Community Climate	**Stage 4, Preplanning:** The attitude in the community is now beginning to reflect interest in the issue: "We have to do something, but we don't know what to do."
Community Knowledge About the Issue	**Stage 4, Preplanning:** Some community members have basic knowledge and recognize that the issue occurs locally, but information and/or access to information is lacking.

Assess Project Evaluability

Evaluation serves as a crucial tool for assessing the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of programs and interventions, particularly in the context of working with Tribes. However, its success within Tribal communities hinges on evaluability and cultural connections. Recognizing the unique cultural context and historical experiences of Tribes is paramount in conducting meaningful evaluations that respect their values, traditions, and ways of life. Understanding community context is important as context grounds all aspects of Indigenous evaluation.[27]

Evaluability

Evaluability refers to the extent to which a program or intervention can be evaluated effectively. In the context of Tribes, evaluability takes on added significance due to the complexity of their sociocultural, economic, and historical circumstances. Many programs implemented within Tribal communities are tailored to address specific challenges (e.g., healthcare disparities, educational inequalities, economic development). Ensuring evaluability for the program requires careful consideration of its objectives, outcomes, resources, and context within the Native community.

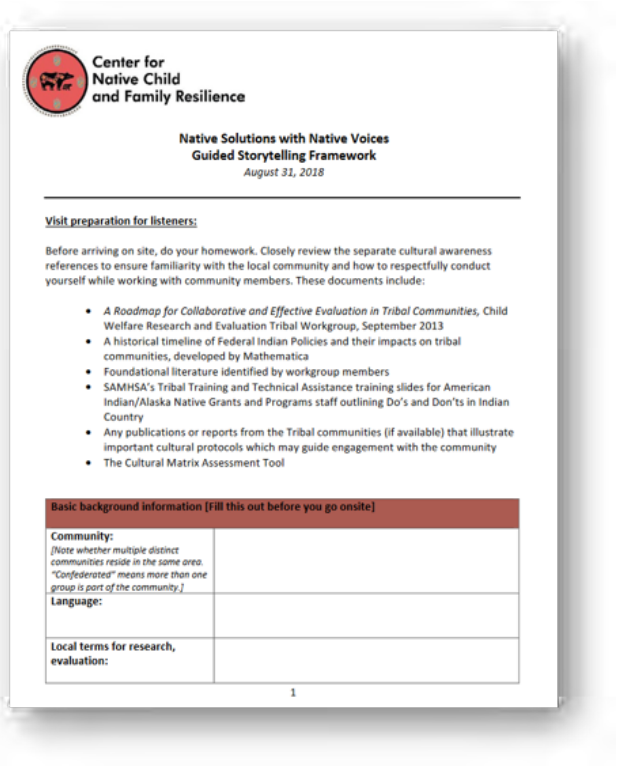
Cultural Connections

One of the key challenges in evaluating programs in Indian Country is the need for culturally appropriate evaluation methods. Western-centric evaluation approaches may not adequately capture the unique values, beliefs, and priorities of Indigenous communities. Cultural connections facilitate the identification of culturally relevant indicators and measures that align with the priorities and aspirations of the Native community. Traditional knowledge and Indigenous methodologies offer valuable insights into what constitutes success or meaningful change within their cultural context.

To be effective in this work, it is essential to (1) engage Tribal members in the evaluation process from the outset and (2) gather information on community perspectives, knowledge systems, and cultural norms that can later be built into an evaluation framework individualized to meet the needs of the specific project. By integrating Indigenous wisdom into the evaluation process, evaluators can ensure that the evaluation criteria are meaningful; relevant; and reflective of the community's values, aspirations, and outcomes of interest.

IWOK-Grounded Approach: The Guided Storytelling Framework

The Center team used an IWOK-grounded approach. It developed the Guided Storytelling Framework (Framework) (Appendix E), which provides a means of gathering information on program and project evaluability, while building upon the strong tradition of oral storytelling in Tribal communities. The Framework includes broad, open-ended questions for individuals or small groups of community members to discuss and assess the community's openness to and preparedness for an evaluation. This approach supports communities to share about their project or program in their own way, helping others to see how it fits into their communities and supports their people.



Center for
Native Child
and Family Resilience

Native Solutions with Native Voices
Guided Storytelling Framework
August 31, 2018

Visit preparation for listeners:

Before arriving on site, do your homework. Closely review the separate cultural awareness references to ensure familiarity with the local community and how to respectfully conduct yourself while working with community members. These documents include:

- *A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities*, Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Tribal Workgroup, September 2013
- A historical timeline of Federal Indian Policies and their impacts on tribal communities, developed by Mathematica
- Foundational literature identified by workgroup members
- SAMHSA's Tribal Training and Technical Assistance training slides for American Indian/Alaska Native Grants and Programs staff outlining Do's and Don'ts in Indian Country
- Any publications or reports from the Tribal communities (if available) that illustrate important cultural protocols which may guide engagement with the community
- The Cultural Matrix Assessment Tool

Basic background information [Fill this out before you go onsite]	
Community: *[Note whether multiple distinct communities reside in the same area. "Confederated" means more than one group is part of the community.]*	
Language:	
Local terms for research, evaluation:	

1

We asked the project leads to identify and invite who they felt would be best able to assist with understanding the program and evaluability components. The project sites' invitations varied, but included program participants, community champions, elders, providers, and partners. The Center team members used the Guided Storytelling Framework to assist with the conversation, although the goal was not to focus on each question but to use it as a probe to gather additional information.

The questions included efforts to gain a better understanding about the community and about services available for wellness and healing, traditional parenting practices, and cultural history. The team inquired about the origins of the projects and programs, history of evaluation in the community, and how the participants know that the program is effective and leading to a positive or desired impact. Through a lengthy conversation and active listening, we gathered valuable information that provided a foundation for initial suggestions on how to begin the development of an evaluation plan.

THE GUIDED STORYTELLING FRAMEWORK ADDRESSES SEVEN CRITICAL DIMENSIONS OF EVALUABILITY:

1. Program context, activities, and resources
2. Evaluation experience of the community and the program
3. Data and data systems currently in place and how they are used
4. Program outcomes
5. Partners and other community support for the program
6. Availability and comparability of potential comparison groups
7. Evaluation capacity of the community and the program

Focusing on these broad topics provides the opportunity for Tribal communities and evaluators to be flexible and responsive to hearing what the communities have to say about their programs, while demonstrating respect for cultural norms and values. The Framework is designed to draw out rich detail about the communities and programs of interest from a range of knowledge bearers within each community. Using this resource, the Center gathered information from project communities that helped tell the story of each community, its program and vision, and how it approaches wellness and healing.

Summary of the Story

Cultural connections enhance the validity and credibility of evaluation findings by contextualizing the results within the broader socio-cultural landscape of the Native Tribe. By understanding the cultural nuances and contextual factors that influence program outcomes, evaluators can provide more nuanced interpretations and recommendations that resonate with the community's lived experiences. Through the participation in the storytelling—and with an increased understanding of the landscape of the community vision—the evaluator needs to summarize the information learned in a short narrative form capturing the essence of the program summary and the findings from the previous community readiness assessment and from the evaluability assessment. Upon completion of the summary of the evaluability assessment, it is important that the community reviews the draft and ensures accuracy in the final version, which will be foundational to building the evaluation plan.

Build a Community of Inquirers

You're at the outset of your journey. You know that building trust and partnership over time is critical for the success of projects, especially when working with Tribal communities, who may have had harmful experiences with researchers in the past. You want to begin the engagement process with honesty and humility, with attention on how you can serve the community and promote bidirectional learning (i.e., give and not take).

Researchers working with AI/AN peoples and communities must understand that relationships and accountability to those relationships are the lynchpin of the entire research (or evaluation) process. As discussed earlier, cultivating genuine partnerships with the Tribal organizations and communities helps bridge intercultural gaps, promotes bidirectional learning, and fosters a sense of trust that results in better evidence gathering with more authentic and representative information about programs. Developing such partnerships involves building trust and mutually beneficial and enriching relationships—the kind built through genuine conversation and shared experience.

Bringing together people who might have different interest areas (e.g., community members, contractors, federal clients) successfully requires building collaborative relationships. This begins with determining who needs to be at the table, though flexibility should be demonstrated here as with other aspects of the project. When thinking about who needs to be at the table, ask for guidance and recommendations and encourage the program to make decisions about the tasks at hand.

Recognize that there may be context in social/professional relationships, unofficial authorities, political dynamics, and protocols which you may not fully understand or know. At this stage, staff may feel pressured by the various tasks needed to move the research project forward, but be prepared to advance slowly, focusing on building trust, connection, and shared interests. This is also a time for ensuring a common understanding of the scope of the project and that the entire team is on the same page.

Developing relationships built on trust will foster stronger partnerships, supporting the community telling its own story. Remember that this journey is not always linear—you will continue to "build a community of inquirers" throughout the journey.

Complete the Pathway to Change

After gaining an understanding of the community's support for and capacity to implement the intended project, the next step is to clarify the desired change. In many Western approaches, a theory of change or logic model is used to guide the workflow and anticipated outcomes. However, in Indian Country, utilizing models rooted in storytelling and Indigenous methods of knowledge gathering results in richer, more meaningful plans that reflect the community values and perspectives.

Theory of Change

A theory of change typically refers to a structured plan or roadmap that defines the processes and outcomes expected when addressing a social issue. This approach, while useful in many contexts, can be seen as a colonized approach when applied to complex social, cultural, or political work, particularly in marginalized or Indigenous communities. At the heart of this critique is the fact that the theory of change framework is often rooted in Western models of logic and linear thinking. It assumes that change happens through a series of predictable, measurable steps, often ignoring the nonlinear, holistic, and cyclical ways in which many Indigenous and non-Western cultures understand change. The linear focus can reduce complex social, cultural, and political realities into oversimplified input-output models, which may not align with the lived experiences of the people and communities that are the focus of the work. This is reflective of colonial patterns where Western ways of knowing and problem solving are imposed as being the "right" way, marginalizing other ways of understanding.

A theory of change often reflects the priorities and interests of funders or governments rather than the priorities of the community itself. When external actors develop these frameworks, they often come with preconceived goals, strategies, and assumptions about how change should happen. This can reproduce colonial power dynamics, where decision-making authority rests with outsiders rather than with the community members most affected by the issues at hand, ultimately impacting relationships with the community.

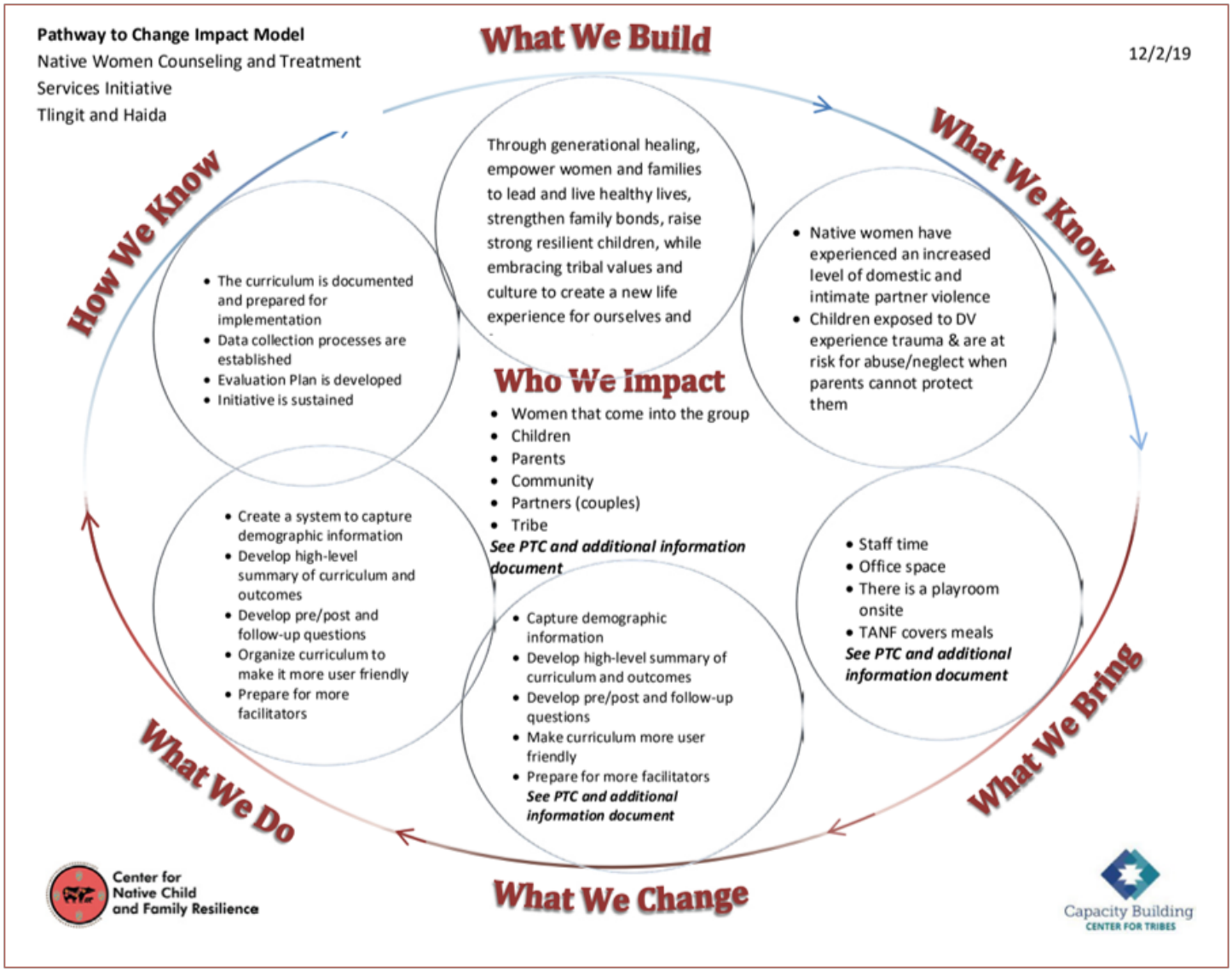
Pathway to Change

To support a decolonized approach to the work, the Pathway to Change (PTC) (See Appendix F) was created under a previous federally funded program within the Capacity Building Center for Tribes. The PTC has been used to support Tribes in the development of an impact model that serves as the project's theory of change. The PTC work culminates with the identification of tasks that will begin the project work plan moving forward.

At its core, the PTC comprises a 7-step process, consisting of onsite listening sessions where information is gathered and discussed, focusing on each step in the process and fully discussing them before moving to the next topic. The PTC provides prompting questions to help focus the conversation and gather the needed information.

The end product of the work is an Impact Model, a visual image that provides a map for achieving program goals. Exhibit 4 provides an example of a completed Impact Model. Each of the five projects supported by the Center team had a completed PTC and Impact Model to guide their work.

Exhibit 4: Example Completed Impact Model



Onsite Meetings

The onsite listening sessions require preparation to facilitate a fruitful discussion of each of the elements of the PTC. The onsite meetings have several phases, as discussed below.

Preparation

Prior to setting up the meetings with the community, the Center worked with the project leads to plan for the development of the Impact Model, allowing plenty of time to support a thorough conversation Preparation should consist of:

- Establishing a date and time for the meeting where the PTC would be created
- Identifying and inviting participants within the project and partners who support the project to assist in planning
- Sending the project lead the activity worksheets (steps 1–7) and the blank Impact Model to the leadership at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting

- Preparing for the onsite meeting by copying materials and worksheets from the PTC guide and providing them to all the participants to support increased participation
- Conducting a brief meeting with the project leads and anyone else who they would like to attend, several days prior to the meeting, to answer questions and to prepare for onsite meeting

A collaborative team supporting this activity is critical to its success, and team development should occur prior to this activity.

Activities

With the support of facilitated conversation, we discussed each of the seven steps of the PTC sequentially. Beginning with step 1, we present the activity to the meeting participants and give them 20 minutes to write down any thoughts they have, following the prompts in the PTC Guide (See Appendix F).

Step 1—What We Build: The PTC activity begins with development of a short statement that captures the long-term desired condition (i.e., future state achieved as a result of the change). The statement becomes your Vision of Success, which you should review regularly as you move through the PTC activity. This activity can take several hours to half a day to complete, depending on the number of participants. As the facilitator of the conversation it will be important to ensure team members do not confuse or conflate a program's mission and vision statement.

- A mission statement outlines an organization's current goals and situation.
- A vision statement outlines its future goals or long-term desired condition it wishes to see as the result of the project the team is working on.

For example, for Step 1 the first activity is to develop a short and memorable statement that captures the long-term desired condition you wish to see because of your project. Each team member is given 20 minutes to write down their thoughts about the long-term desired condition keeping in mind the "Questions to Consider" for each activity. After 20 minutes, the team comes back together, and everyone shares their ideas about the long-term condition. The facilitator writes down the individual ideas for the full team to discuss and to decide which ones are closest to the desired vision of success. This process can happen quickly, or, more likely, take several hours to reach a consensus on the statement. The project's long-term vision of success is critical to guiding the conversations in the remaining activities. As such, providing ample time to support the discussions leading to a common vision is time well spent.

Step 2—Who We Impact: The next step is to identify the people, groups, and stakeholders affected by the changes brought about by achieving the Vision of Success. Potential groups to consider include mothers, fathers, children, youth, adolescents, community, child welfare professionals, the Tribe, etc.

- The team is given 20 minutes to write down its thoughts about who will be affected by the Vision of Success developed in Step 1 and then discuss who they think these will be.
- Once consensus is reached, the team is ready to move to the next activity.

Step 3—What We Know: Subsequently, you compile background and contextual information relevant to achieving the Vision of Success and completing your project.

- During this activity, the team discusses the current situation in the community where the program operates, centering on how the child welfare program currently operates, what is happening within the program and community that could support or detract from the project, and what data are maintained about the issues involved.
- Again, the team arrives at a consensus and moves to Step 4.

Step 4—What We Bring: This step involves identifying the resources, strengths, and challenges that the program, Tribal community, and children and families bring to the desired project and that the program will use in achieving the Vision of Success.

- The team arrives at a consensus around what formal and informal resources are available in the program and community: What are the major strengths and resources of the program, community, and children and families? What are the major challenges and risk factors facing children and families in the community?
- Upon consensus, the team moves to Step 5.

Step 5—What We Change: In this step, you will identify the specifics of what will be different once you achieve your Vision of Success.

- At this point, the team should stop and ponder what it agreed to in the first 4 steps. For example, Step 4 will assist the team with this step since it has already reached a consensus about available formal and informal resources.
- If a resource is needed to achieve the Vision of Success, Step 4 tells the team if that resource is available or not. If not, the team knows it will need to be developed and added to the list developed in this step.
- Discussions consist of what needs to (1) be put in place or revamped and (2) exist in the future to achieve the Vision of Success.

Step 6—What We Do: At this point, you will list some of the activities that will lead to the changes identified in the previous step, What We Change. Discussions for this step consist of determining:

- What activities will help with making the changes
- What tasks need to be a part of each activity
- Who needs to be involved
- What will be the result of each activity

Step 7—How We Know (i.e., evaluation and continuous quality improvement [CQI]): The purpose of this step is to think about how the evaluation and CQI concepts of outputs and milestones are connected to the activities you are undertaking. It looks at some of the activities listed in the Step 6, What We Do (and related to a change discussed in Step 5, What We Change) and identifies outputs and milestones for those activities.

- Although it is suggested that the program's evaluator be involved in all steps of the PTC, they will need to be involved in the development of How We Know as this step involves evaluation and CQI concepts of outputs and milestones. (For the five Center projects, the evaluator participated in all seven steps).
- As with all the steps, the team reaches a consensus around outputs and milestones.

Once all seven steps are complete, the information listed in Steps 6 and 7 can then be easily copied and used as a foundation and starting point for building the project workplan. The workplan lists critical steps in planning, preparing for, rolling out, and sustaining the selected intervention(s) and serves as a roadmap to guide the project. The Center used a project workplan template (Appendix G), a living document that served as a monitoring tool to ensure the process of implementing the proposed solution is on track.

Plan for Legacy

Why Legacy Planning?

To ensure long-term success and impact, plans for projects should include consideration and understanding of the sustainability of the program after implementation. A program's legacy refers to how it continues to operate in a community as the way things are done (i.e., its ability to sustain itself over time and to continue to serve the community). Creating a sustainable program requires ongoing support and resources to help it remain effective and continue to achieve its goals. Sometimes this involves planning for sustaining an entire program (e.g., ensuring its continued existence following the end of grant funding). Other times, this means planning for the program's legacy, perhaps when the entire program cannot be sustained but critical elements of it persist in an institution or a community. The legacy of a program might look different depending on where the program is in the planning process and its incorporation in the larger community.

Organizations should consider the desired legacy of cultural resilience, family strengthening, child protection, community resilience, and risk reduction they want for their program. Legacy planning may involve not just consideration of financial resources for the continuation of a program in its entirety, but also might include understanding the relationships with and between community entities (e.g., community members, agencies, coalitions), community support for the program, and leadership in the community. The Center used a Legacy Planning Tool to facilitate conversations with Tribes about plans for sustaining their programs. These discussions led to the creation of Legacy Plans, resources that programs could continue to use, update, and revise.

Legacy Planning Tool

The Legacy Planning Tool (Appendix H) serves as a discussion guide for facilitators to use in a series of collaborative meetings with program staff. The tool prompts participants to help gather the information required for planning for sustainability, and for brainstorming ways to address the key elements of sustainability. The tool provides prompting questions to help staff envision a legacy for their program and to figure out how the program can continue to help increase Tribal well-being. None of the prompts are mandatory, and not every prompt will apply to every program.

Divided into two parts (Planning the Legacy and Creating the Legacy), ideally facilitators should use Planning the Legacy early in the life cycle of a program to help the site think through its specific vision and mission for the program. Team members can use the section on Creating the Legacy later in the life cycle of the project to more concretely assess where the program is in relation to the outlined vision and what staff need to do to get there. By considering and planning for these elements of the project at implementation, staff can build and sustain a program, guided by culture, that becomes a foundational part of the community.

Legacy Planning Lessons Learned

A program must plan for its legacy and sustainability at its initial implementation. Legacy plans include a collaborative discussion focused on the availability of alternate support systems required to sustain the program (e.g., training and coaching, data collection, staff selection, fidelity monitoring, evaluation considerations). Additional efforts must be made to consider and plan for:

- Organizational infrastructure and processes (e.g., finding an administrative home for the project), required leadership, community and organizational partnerships, communication protocols, and data-based decision making
- Fiscal strategies and resources for sustainability, including determining financial strategies for funding direct services and the organizational resources needed to continue to effectively implement the program

The Center and the programs themselves learned lessons through the process of legacy planning, and the Center observed commonalities among the programs' legacy plans. For many programs, sustainability discussions focused on staffing topics. Programs identified the need to prepare for staff turnover and for succession planning for anticipated retirements; recommended onboarding and mentoring processes to orient new staff; and planned to document and sustain the shared knowledge developed through the program. These plans noted the importance of building buy-in for the program, as well as for the community and partner organizations.

Design the Evaluation

How You Got Here

By now, you've likely built a community of inquirers made up of key thought partners and community champions steeped in the project or program you intend to evaluate. On your evaluation journey before this step, you should have also completed an assessment of readiness and evaluability and developed a PTC. Based on this work, you should have a deep understanding of the program or project you intend to evaluate and the context and history of the community it operates in, as well as a sense of the local IWOK and the program's vision for the future.

If you do not have a sense of any of the above, stop, and revisit the tools and references in previous sections before proceeding with evaluation design.

Where You Are: Designing An Evaluation

This section provides examples of processes and tools that the Center used in its work with Tribal programs. Part of the Center's journey involved developing evaluation strategies and tools that:

- Honor local knowledge-making practices
- Elicit accurate and meaningful information about the program and its impact on participants and the community
- Avoid the pitfalls that Western-style evaluation strategies and tools often fall into when working with Indigenous communities

This content covers the life cycle of evaluation design work, from getting a sense of who people are and what they want to know about the program (and its desired effects) to identifying possible information sources, establishing a cultural metaphor to guide the work, and developing approaches for gathering information. More specifically, this part of the evaluation journey will cover:

- Designing an evaluation plan
- Developing evaluation questions
- Identifying information sources
- Gathering appropriate permissions
- Establishing a timeline of activities

You will notice terms in this discussion, such as "mind mapping" and "meaning making." These refer to processes the Center adopted to make evaluation activities more culturally responsive, effective, and respectful, while avoiding terms potentially laden with historical trauma due to their association with intrusive research methodologies. Adjusting our vocabulary opened the doors to new ways of doing this work, informed by the principles of IWOK.

Designing an Evaluation Plan

A good place to start your evaluation design process is by employing the Center's Community Driven Evaluation Planning Tool (Planning Tool). See Appendix I.

Why the Planning Tool?

The Planning Tool will help guide and empower you through the evaluation design process. Use it to initiate and foster ongoing guided conversations with your community and evaluation partners. Work with them to take stock of where they are in their story and where they want and need assistance in getting to where they hope to go. In your discussions, you should identify and consider the purpose evaluation might serve for the community.

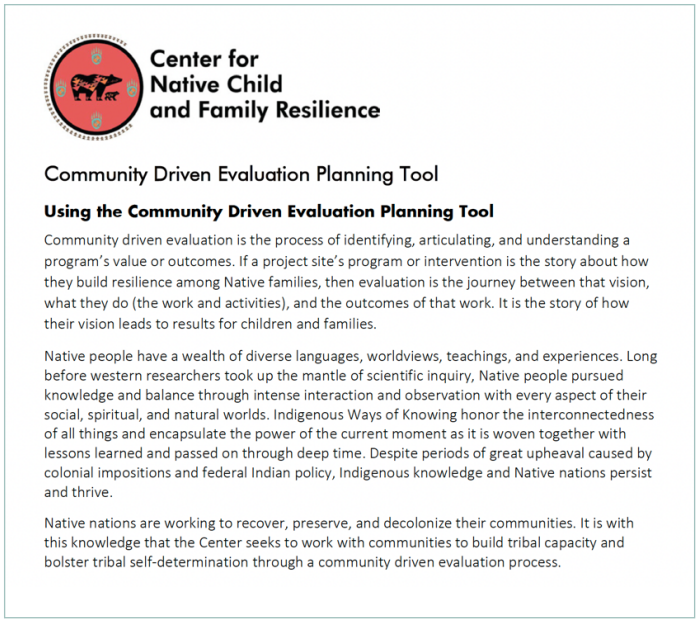
Ultimately, use this tool to identify community values and to inform the development of individualized community driven evaluation plans, which could include one or more of the following:

- Outcome evaluations, which could help project sites understand if the program is having the intended effects
- Implementation or process evaluations to identify the extent to which project sites are running their program as intended
- Cost evaluations to help project sites figure out how much their program costs to operate
- Quality assurance plans to help the project site team implement the program in a way that aligns with what it wants

Why is this useful?

Developing a community driven evaluation plan provides a pathway of common understanding toward implementing an evaluation. It will act as a reference point that clearly delineates the components of the evaluation (i.e., outcome, process, cost) as well as the:

- Program goals and anticipated outcomes
- Program description
- Evaluation planning context



Center for
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Community Driven Evaluation Planning Tool

Using the Community Driven Evaluation Planning Tool

Community driven evaluation is the process of identifying, articulating, and understanding a program's value or outcomes. If a project site's program or intervention is the story about how they build resilience among Native families, then evaluation is the journey between that vision, what they do (the work and activities), and the outcomes of that work. It is the story of how their vision leads to results for children and families.

Native people have a wealth of diverse languages, worldviews, teachings, and experiences. Long before western researchers took up the mantle of scientific inquiry, Native people pursued knowledge and balance through intense interaction and observation with every aspect of their social, spiritual, and natural worlds. Indigenous Ways of Knowing honor the interconnectedness of all things and encapsulate the power of the current moment as it is woven together with lessons learned and passed on through deep time. Despite periods of great upheaval caused by colonial impositions and federal Indian policy, Indigenous knowledge and Native nations persist and thrive.

Native nations are working to recover, preserve, and decolonize their communities. It is with this knowledge that the Center seeks to work with communities to build tribal capacity and bolster tribal self-determination through a community driven evaluation process.

- Research questions for each evaluation component
- Information sources
- Consent procedures
- Evaluation timeline (i.e., who; when; where; and how information will be gathered, analyzed, and reported)

Appendix J provides a completed evaluation plan from the Center's work with the Yéil Koowú Shaawát program. It illustrates the output of the above community driven evaluation planning process and exemplifies the content and structure of an evaluation plan.

It is important to note that this example was developed and informed by close collaboration and engagement between the Center team and key project site staff from the Tribal community we partnered with. Your plan will look different and reflect the priorities and values of your partners and Tribal community. We regarded this evaluation plan as a living document that evolved over the course of several months and a series of weekly calls and site visits.

YÉIL KOOWÚ SHAAWÁT (RAVEN TAIL WOMAN) EVALUATION PLANNING

The Center engaged group participants in a series of talking circles and information gatherings (both on site and virtually) to help the Center team better understand:

- What are the core components of the curriculum?
- How is the curriculum implemented?
- What outcomes do participants associate with participation?
- What is the preferred line of evaluative inquiry to ensure the evaluation reflects local cultural values and the program's expressed long-term goals?

Whether through weekly check-ins, site visits, mind mapping, ceremony, or talking circles, the Center gathered information directly from the facilitator(s) and participants of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum to provide their perspective of the curriculum and the cultural and metaphorical logic that underpins its approach to healing. Through our engagement with the group, we identified important outcomes of interest that connect to women's experiences in the group, while also mapping closely onto the traditional values of the Tlingit and Haida. The women also helped us understand the appropriate method for collecting data and for identifying information sources. IWOK consultant Dr. Priscilla Day informed the formation of the evaluation questions and information sources and helped ensure the evaluation approach is both culturally and scientifically rigorous.

What may arise?

Many Tribal programs operate in complex, shifting environments that makes assigning long-term plans challenging. As a result, the Center took an adaptive management approach to evaluation design and implementation. This allowed us to balance analytic and cultural rigor, while responding to the emergent needs of the community and lessons learned throughout the evaluation process. In many ways, your evaluation plan, questions, and methods represent the evaluative potential based on the interests and needs of the project.

As you begin evaluation activities, it is possible that new lines of inquiry may arise, existing evaluation questions may shift to maintain relevance to what you're evaluating, and unexpected and emergent outcomes may necessitate further exploration. As a result, you should design your evaluation plan to be a living document, which allows flexibility to react and pursue project-driven evaluative inquiry that reflects the needs of the project.

Below we share some strategies and activities that further show how we developed the evaluation plan. Remember, as with any journey, there are wrong turns, disagreements on the appropriate path forward, and unexpected stops along the way; this is part of any collaborative evaluation process.

> Iteration and failing forward are important parts of the journey. Indeed, some of the Center's most productive evaluation questions and information-gathering strategies emerged from dead ends and failures along the way. We embraced these processes as important opportunities to deepen collaboration, facilitate bidirectional learning, and embrace new paths forward.

Remember there is no one size fits all approach to evaluation work; especially with Tribal communities. Utilize the tools and references above but adapt them for your own purposes. While the evaluation plan will guide the implementation of your evaluation, it should also be a living document that reflects the iterative nature of participatory evaluation. Sometimes plans change . . . and that is okay and expected. Taking ample time to develop and iterate upon an evaluation plan is highly recommended. Investing time during the evaluation planning phase will lead to more efficient information gathering, analyses, and reporting.

Using Mind Mapping to Identify Cultural Metaphors, Key Values, Outcomes of Interest, and Research Questions of Interest

In addition to the community driven evaluation planning tool, we used mind mapping, a process that draws out implicit knowledge about a particular topic and allows a group to explore ideas collectively using graphics, imagery, and metaphor.

The Center's practice of mind mapping was grounded in the oral tradition and IWOK and involved groups working through the process collaboratively by creating a picture, identifying activation words, building out/expanding upon those activation words, and reflecting through collective discussion. The aim is to ultimately have the map tell the story more holistically. Using the process of mind mapping provides the opportunity for:

- A deeper conversation with communities about their outcomes of interest and programmatic expectations, resulting in rich cultural metaphors and the development of story-driven evaluations
- Communities to make their values and goals explicit to themselves and communicate them in-depth to people outside the community.

Mind mapping can be used to support the work in multiple ways and creates a safe space for reflection, collaboration, and bidirectional learning. The Center team used mind mapping most frequently in work with communities to identify key cultural values, theories of change, and outcomes of interest for the evaluation. The results often identified cultural metaphors that informed evaluation research questions, shaped information gathering processes, and acted as an Indigenous logic model for the projects.

In our experience, mind mapping was one of the most enjoyable and effective ways to empower our Tribal partners to engage and reflect on the evaluation design and planning process. It was particularly useful when we found ourselves at a dead end, disagreement, or in need of group knowledge making.

Mind mapping is meant to be a very flexible and open process that you can apply to whatever issue you're trying to better understand. In some cases, we generated mind maps in just a few meetings; in other cases, our partners felt very empowered and developed very detailed artistic maps that took months to complete. In either case, the creation of mind maps brought people together in service of a common goal—an inclusive way to share knowledge. It is important that you are intentional about creating a safe place for people to engage, reflect, and share knowledge without apprehension or worry about "right" or "wrong' answers. This should be a fun process!

Below we share examples of how the mind mapping process unfolded with our partners to support a cross-section of important evaluation plan priorities, including the identification of a cultural metaphor, outcomes of interest, information-gathering strategies, and evaluation research questions.

Using Mind Mapping to Develop Evaluation Questions

Formulating research questions is a critical and fundamental aspect of evaluation design and implementation. Tribally driven evaluation questions should not only align with the goals and expected outcomes of the program, but also be grounded in and reflect local IWOK. This requires deep engagement and iteration with local partners and knowledge bearers. Alongside regular meetings, the Center team used mind mapping to support the development of evaluation research questions.

My Two Aunties

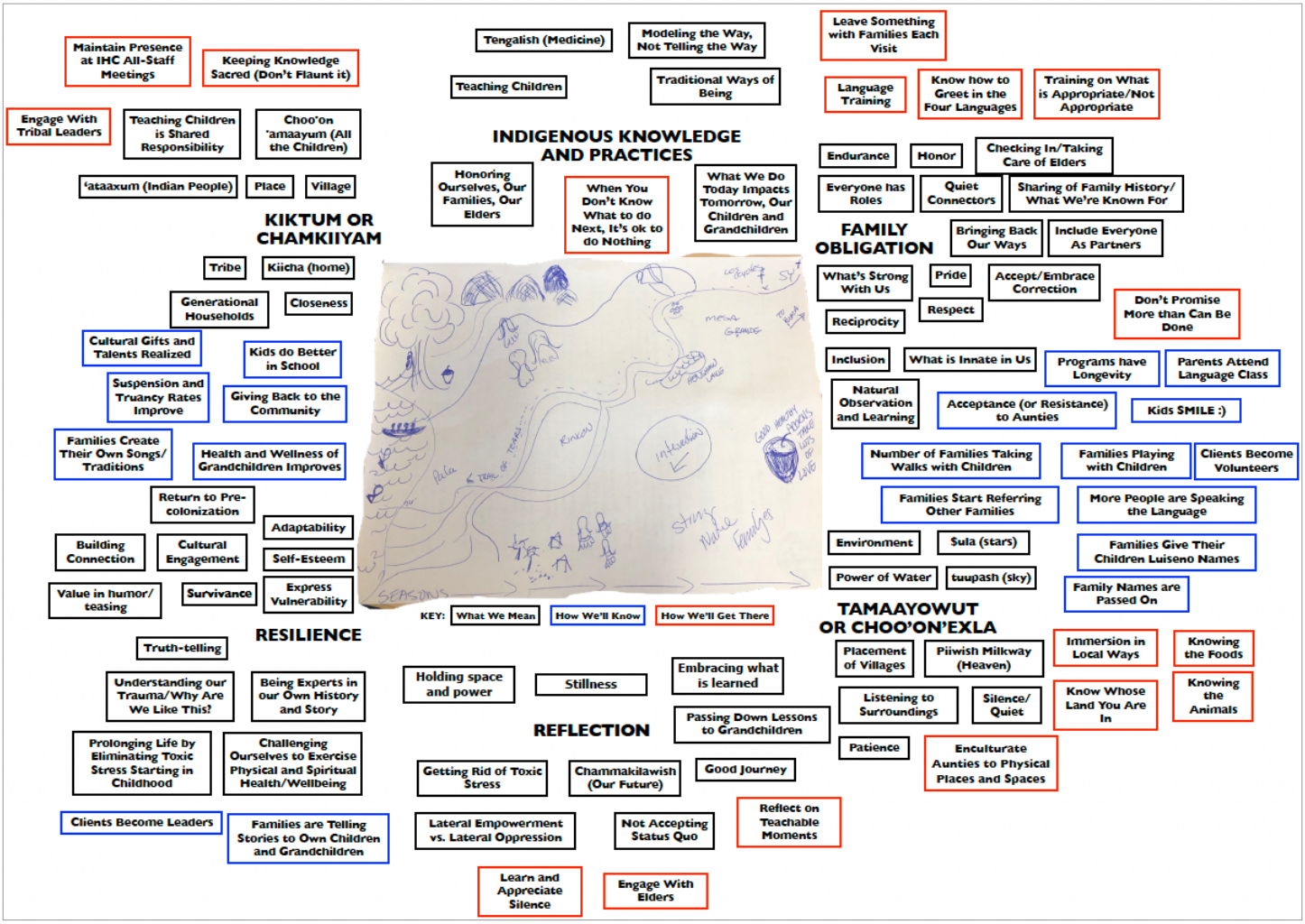
Here's an example of how the mind mapping process unfolded to support the development of evaluation questions with one of our partners. The M2A program is housed within the TFS Department at the IHC, a healthcare consortium of 9 federally recognized Tribes located in an 1,800-square mile service area in the northern part of San Diego County, CA.

To ground research question development in local IWOK and to embody the M2A program model's outcomes and long-term goals, the Center team facilitated a multisession mind mapping activity. Mind mapping was an opportunity for the Center team to step back and listen to the wisdom and expertise of our partners and those steeped in local IWOK. The result over the course of several weeks was a flurry of generative activity that captured rich expressions of participants' views on cultural meaning, healing, and symbolism. Moreover, the mind mapping work further galvanized the project team in an approach so that its members were unafraid of being thought partners, failing forward if needed, and trusting in a collaborative process.

Our partners shaped a picture; identified activation words; built out and expanded upon the activation words with locally relevant language, history, and knowledge; and reflected on the picture and its meaning through dialogue and meaning making. The aim was to have the map tell the story of the program more holistically and in a way that reflects local IWOK. In this case, mind mapping prompts included questions such as:

- When you think of destigmatizing/decolonizing home visitation, what image comes to mind?
- When you think of strong Native children and families, what comes to mind?
- When you think of Aunties and their impact on children and families, what comes to mind?
- What future do you envision for children and families after My Two Aunties has been developed and running for a few years?

The mind-mapping process culminated in a visual presentation of the M2A model's key values, theories of change, and outcomes of interest.



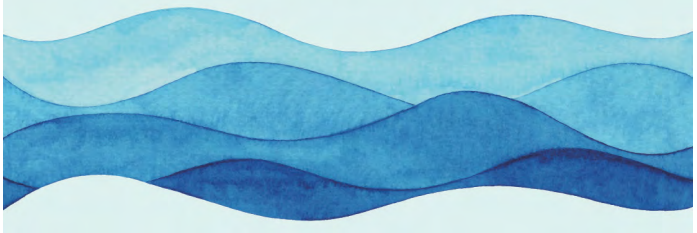
Every aspect of the illustration is imbued with meaning representative of core Payómkawichum values. Perhaps most importantly, the mind map conveyed an important cultural metaphor and traditional story of The Three Sisters (see Exhibit 5) that became the backbone of the evaluation and its research questions.

It was during mind mapping that the M2A project director told the team the story of The Three Sisters and spoke about the illustration and what it meant to her and her community. She discussed the importance of traditional ways that focused on caring for one's body before giving birth, like one cares for the environment around them to foster good produce, saying, "Good healthy acorns takes lots of love." She went on to describe how the acorn tree is upstream, and the three sisters are going upriver to find upstream solutions, just like the Aunties and M2A team preventing and intervening upon child maltreatment by instilling cultural family life skills, connecting women to services, and advocating for a revitalization of traditional ways to combat unresolved grief and trauma that impacts children and families.

Exhibit 5: The Story of the Three Sisters

THE STORY OF THE THREE SISTERS

The life of the river and three sisters. Three sisters were going through the forest, and as they walk, they hear the cries of babies. As they get closer to the river, they see babies flowing down the river. Immediately, the first sister jumps in and starts saving all the babies she can, so they don't go down to treacherous waters. The second sister jumps in the middle of the stream and teaches the children how to float on their back and how to swim and doggy paddle to survive. The third sister goes upstream to find out why babies are falling in the river in the first place and prevent it.



The mind map stimulated a broader conversation that ultimately led to research questions that captured its spirit and resonated with the team. The implementation evaluation research questions explored whether and how the M2A program destigmatizes social services and empowers both IHC staff and families to embrace local IWOK to prevent and intervene upon child maltreatment. The implementation evaluation also focused on better understanding areas for CQI, model improvement, potential needs to support the Aunties, and replication of the model. The outcome evaluation research questions, like the story of the Three Sisters, focused on understanding how the M2A program contributes to primary, secondary, and tertiary outcomes among families.

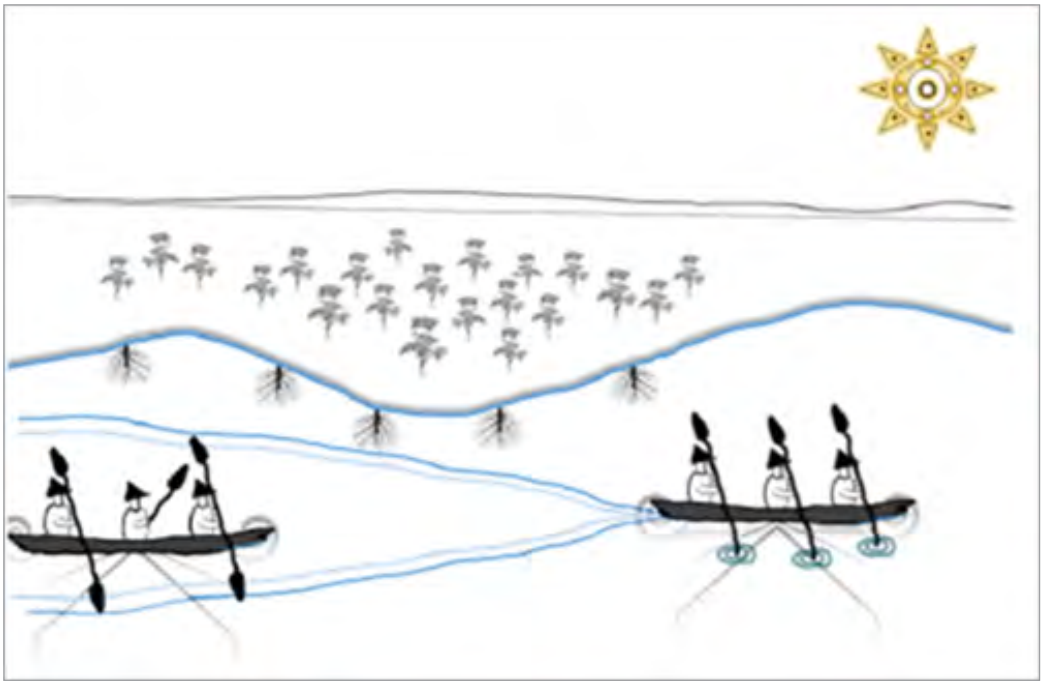
Using Mind Mapping to Identify Program Visions

Projects that have already been initiated and implementation has started may not always have a clear and concise program vision with a common community understanding of the outcomes of the initiative. Mind mapping can be a useful tool to engage the project team members and community in developing a visual representation of the outcomes of the program.

Txin Kaanguˆx initiative

The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Council established the Txin Kaanguˆx Initiative (TKI) to integrate services and bring a holistic approach to healing and wholeness that relies on collaboration and creativity in service provision. One of the critical pieces of our work with TKI was a creative group mind mapping activity designed to elicit and create a visual representation of the project in ways that might not otherwise be captured by more literal and linear discussions. For purposes of the Center's work with TKI, the mind mapping exercise further helped identify the community's outcomes of interest for the evaluation period. Because one of the Initiative's leaders had previously mentioned the importance of artistic expression to their team, we knew that mind mapping would align with the values of this group while supporting the goal of establishing a shared vision for the Txin Kaanguˆx Initiative to inform the priorities of the evaluation.

Through multiple meetings, participants independently created a visual representation of the goals of the project, brought the visual representations together, and began to combine them to create one image.



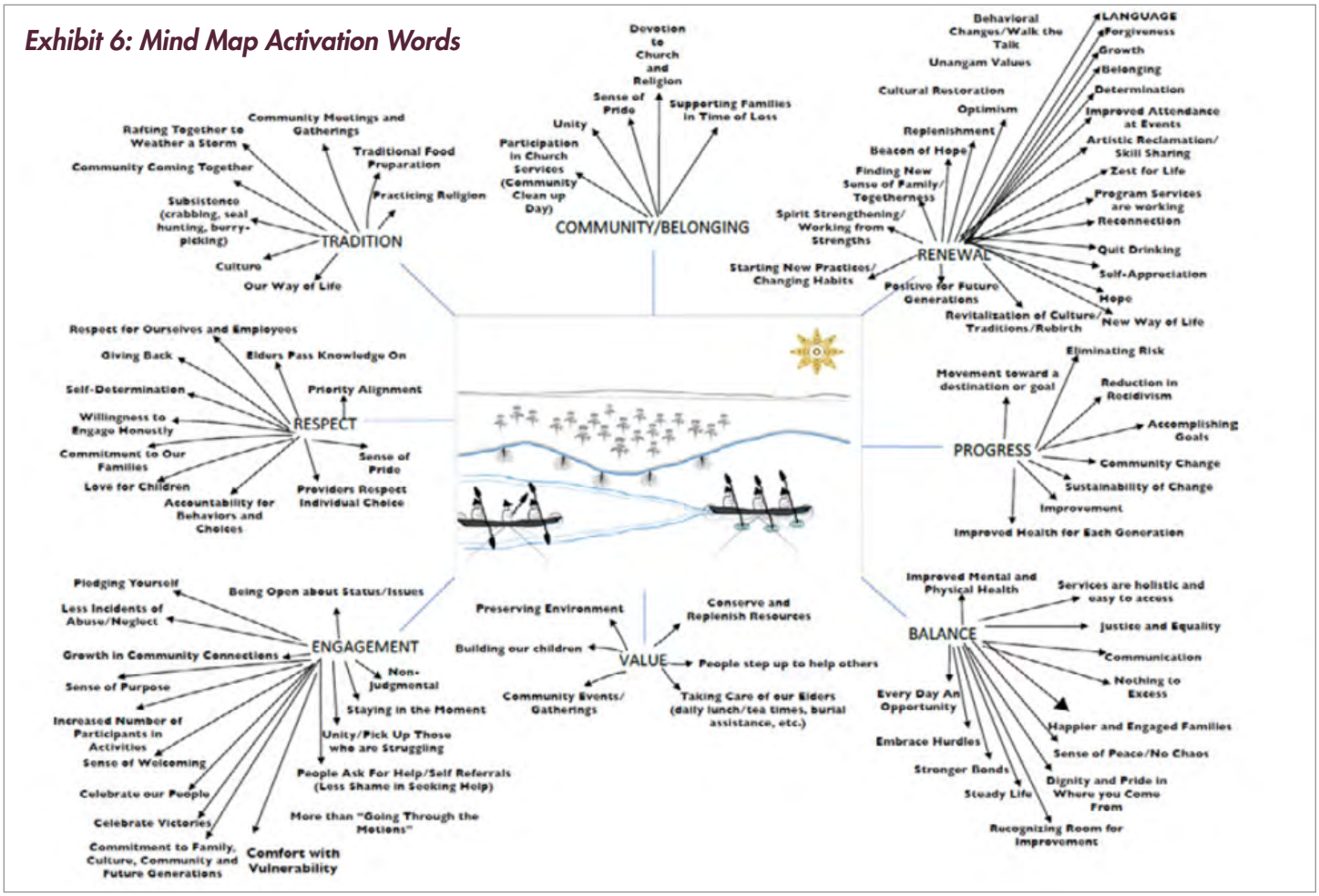
TXIN KAANGUX̂ INITIATIVE'S (TKI) MIND MAPPING PROCESS:

We facilitated TKI's use of mind mapping to understand the community's outcomes of interest through these high-level steps:

1. **Seeding the conversation** by asking the participants to create their own visual representation by reacting to one of two prompts:
   - » What is the primary change that will occur within families or the island community of St. Paul once the Initiative has been running for a while?
   - » How will knowing, understanding, and embracing sovereignty and self-responsibility impact the community?
2. **Hosting a discussion** of the resulting representations, allowing the members of the group to explain their work and how it addressed the seed prompts
3. **Helping the participants identify** the themes they want to incorporate into the single vision embodied by the mind map, as well as the representational elements that would be key for doing so
4. **Creating an initial representation** to begin the iterative process to make clear what it represents
5. **Having participants identify "activation words"** (i.e., the words that come to mind when looking at the picture), starting with as long a list of activation words as the TKI team came up with them and then narrowing them to a consensus on eight main concepts
6. **Specifying the activation words using short phrases** that identify how the team would know that the Initiative had been successful in each of the areas identified by the "activation words"

Following the initial image, the team facilitated a conversation to identify activation words, representing ideas that came to mind when participants looked at the image and thought about what it means for the community. The team continued to develop the language and refine the image through an iterative process as the conversations progressed (Exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Mind Map Activation Words



ACTIVATION WORD MEANING

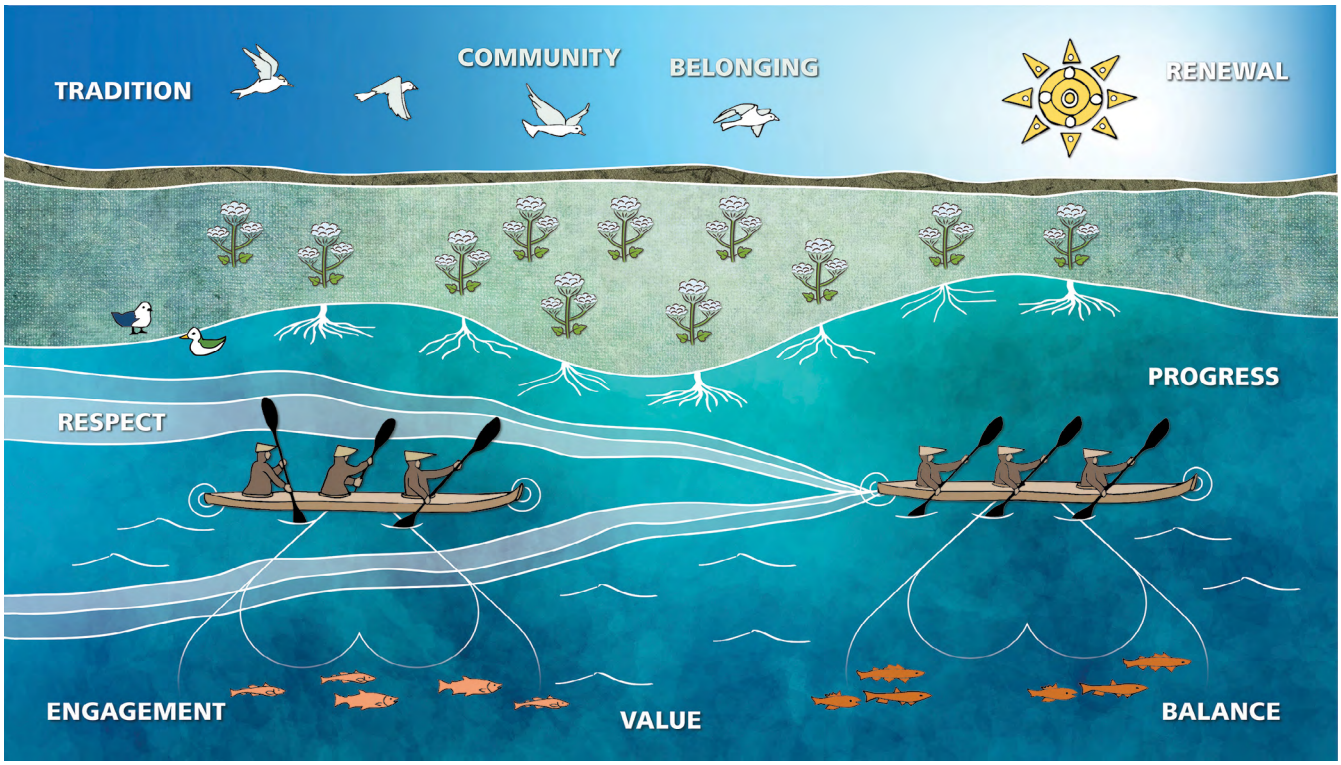
- **Engagement:** Increased community connectedness; people asking for help/self-referrals (less shame in seeking help)
- **Respect:** Elders passing on knowledge; youth seeking elder knowledge
- **Tradition:** Subsistence (e.g., crabbing, seal hunting, berry picking); preparing traditional food
- **Community/Belonging:** Sense of pride; unity; devotion to church and religion; supporting families in time of loss
- **Renewal:** Revitalization and rebirth of culture, traditions, and language; hope; self-appreciation
- **Progress:** Movement towards a destination or goal; community change; sustainability of change; eliminating risk; reducing recidivism
- **Balance:** Holistic and easy-to-access services; dignity and pride in where you come from; sense of peace; recognizing room for improvement
- **Value:** Preserving the environment; conserving and replenishing resources; people stepping up to help others; taking care of our elders; building up our children

Once all of the activation words and phrases have been finalized, the team drafted a story to accompany the map, encapsulating the meaning behind each component. Titled by the community as The Sea of Change, the map serves to guide the work. Exhibit 7 is the final map for the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, and currently hangs in its administrative offices as a reminder of the vision. The key activation words are seen in the final image.

Exhibit 7. Txin Kaangux̂ Initiative's Final Mind Map and Story

SEA OF CHANGE: STORY OF THE MIND MAP

The individuals paddling in the Baidarka demonstrate the importance of working together. When paddlers are not paddling in unison, as shown by the left Baidarka, the journey is more strenuous and frustrating. However, when the struggling paddler has someone modeling in the front and someone supporting them from behind, we move to the second Baidarka, as shown on the right, with everyone paddling together. The wake of this Baidarka serves as a guide for those behind it, leading the way.



The sun symbolizes what the paddlers are traveling toward: light, warmth, energy, love, and life. The poochkis and their roots symbolize the culture, traditions, history, and way of life for people on the island. What is beneath the surface is responsible for all that blooms and flourishes on the bountiful island. This is also represented in the reflections of the hearts that are beneath the paddlers, to remind us that the love and spirit that guides our work, even if not always visible, is always there.

Identifying Sources of Information

With the development of a clear cultural metaphor and a set of evaluation research questions aligned with the goals of the program, you can now turn to identifying information sources and information-gathering methods. These methods should be documented along with the research questions in the evaluation plan. Work with your partners to ascertain the level of interest in pursuing information sources and associated information-gathering strategies that reflect and honor the storytelling tradition and local IWOK. Identifying information sources and developing information gathering strategies is another opportunity to be creative and to collaborate, while also maintaining a commitment to evaluation methods that do not impose or confound the expressed goals of the evaluation or the culture and community it reflects. Information sources and information gathering tools should be sensitive and responsive to culture.

Using multiple information sources can help to overcome limitations of administrative data that may vary in availability and quality. Many Tribes may not have the resources for robust management information systems to track service delivery and participant outcomes data. Even if Tribes have child welfare data systems, the systems may not have the necessary tracking and reporting capacity or a scope that includes all the relevant information (e.g., about prevention programs). To address this potential problem, we use an approach that emphasizes direct data collection from site visits, cost workbooks, and participant intake and outtake forms. However, to minimize burden on sites, the plan can be adapted to include administrative data, if there is administrative data available. This approach, which uses confidential intake and outtake forms and culturally grounded storytelling for case studies, allows for high quality, Tribally focused data collection on sensitive topics.

Identify Potential Information-Gathering Strategies: Matching Community's Readiness, Level of Engagement, and Evaluation Needs

In our experience at the Center, staff at Tribal programs often feel constrained or intimidated by information gathering or what is often called "data collection." Due to perceptions of what data are and how they are usually collected and

Our M2A partners expressed an interest in pursuing information sources and information-gathering approaches that honored the storytelling tradition and focused on people's lived experience with the model, whether as a family receiving the model or as an IHC clinician implementing or referring to the service. In keeping with the project team's desire to honor the storytelling tradition, the information-gathering methods centered on facilitating interviews and small group discussions with external partners, families, M2A staff, and IHC staff (see information-gathering section below).

Similarly, our Yéil Koowú Shaawát partners sought to assess the extent to which the program was being implemented with fidelity, as well as how the curriculum influenced women's healing. To inform these lines of inquiry, the team worked with the women's group to identify appropriate information sources and information-gathering strategies. It was particularly important to be sensitive to and considerate of women's experiences with various forms of trauma, including intergenerational and historic trauma, when gathering information. We learned from the group participants that it was very important for them to tell their stories. As a result, the team favored talking circles rather than interviews because the group curriculum started each session with a talking circle; an evaluation talking circle felt like a natural extension of what they were already doing each week. Additionally, the presence of other women provided support and comfort during discussions that often recounted trauma and other sensitive topics. Talking circles opened with prayer and ceremony, which also provided a sense of comfort and protection during evaluation talking circles. We describe other participant-driven, information-gathering strategies below.

interpreted, this is largely associated with Western modalities (i.e., processes with quantitative approaches and numbers that feel cold, disconnected, burdensome, and foreign to their local WOK). Moreover, many programs lack the capacity or infrastructure to gather hard data. That is not to say that quantitative data do not have value or that Tribal programs don't use and value such data. However, in our experience, information-gathering strategies should reflect and align with the community's readiness, level of engagement, needs, and local traditions. The process of understanding what that looks like in your particular project or community will take time, collaboration, and iteration.

Below we share examples of information-gathering strategies derived from close collaboration with our partners. In many cases, identifying information-gathering strategies involved failing forward together toward a common goal. We often iterated and piloted multiple strategies before ultimately employing an information-gathering tool. More often than not, the process of failing and iterating together led to innovative and culturally responsive tools.

INFORMATION GATHERING VS. DATA COLLECTION: WORDS MATTER

Where traditional Western approaches to research and evaluation address themselves to "data collection," we took to talking in terms of "information gathering" instead. There were a few reasons for this. First, the history of settler research in Indian Country is replete with troubling and unethical research practices; sadly, this is not merely historical, but includes at least some of the contemporary context. For better or worse, the use of the expression "data collection" is closely associated with those practices. Second, talk of "data collection" felt reductive. Conceiving of our work as "information gathering" allowed us to avoid terms tied to historical trauma, while conveying the sense to the communities we worked with that they had knowledge that we would gather in one place, synthesize, and share back with them.

Develop Tools

Word Cloud Personal Reflection Tool

Personal reflection tools are a great example of how an iterative, trial-and-error process led to very responsive and novel approaches to gathering information. Finding information-gathering tools that invite candid and useful responses from people using child welfare services can be an ongoing challenge.

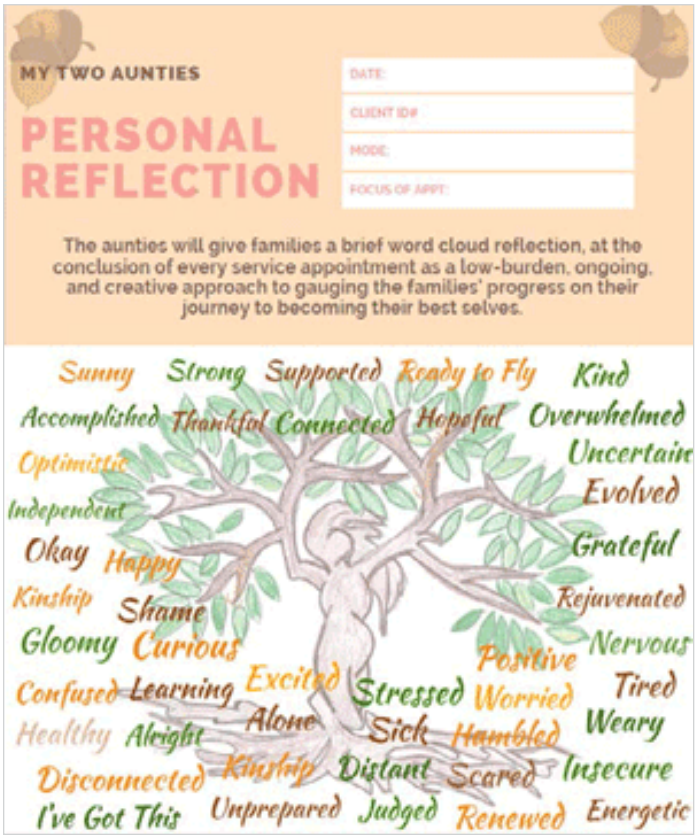
Initial Tool

Part of the work we did with the M2A program, located on the traditional homelands of the Payómkawichum or Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, involved helping M2A develop a culturally grounded tool for gathering information about how mothers felt after engaging with its services.

The concept for the tool originated when the program director expressed interest in devising a tool to understand how clients experienced their visits with the Auntie and how they felt after each visit, as well as to track healing and growth over time. At first, we inventoried existing Likert (or rating) scales and other assessments that the Aunties could use at the end of family visits to score family responses along a range of experiences. However, these ultimately did not align with evaluation goals and were not normed or tested with Indigenous people. The instruments also felt too far removed from IWOK and the oral tradition. Additionally, the Aunties and program director expressed concern that quantitative tools might threaten the therapeutic rapport with families.

Redesigned Tool

As a result, we worked with the M2A program to leverage some positive feedback we generated during one of our many brainstorming discussions about potential information-gathering strategies, which centered on mothers being able to choose a word or feeling that captured their visit with the Aunties. The program director liked the idea of including a culturally relevant visual to engage the families in something vibrant and eye catching. After much trial and error and consultation with the M2A team and IWOK consultant, the Center team finished the design of the tool, which presents the Mother Oak, a powerful representation of local IWOK and an array of expressive words (chosen by members of the M2A team) that cover a spectrum of positive, neutral, and negative feelings. At the conclusion of each service appointment, the Aunties spent about 3–5 minutes administering the tool, asking mothers to circle up to five words and giving the option of writing in responses if the word cloud did not represent words they were feeling. Clients could engage virtually using an online version of the tool.



The result is a low-burden, culturally grounded approach to informing CQI. However, it was useful for even more; after fielding the tool, the M2A project recognized its potential for helping Aunties connect mothers to additional services or referrals, based on responses. The tool helped them better understand client needs and to offer inroads into probing for and providing other supports or referrals to additional services based on their responses; this resulted in better tailoring their services for mothers and in improving the quality of their visits. To that end, the Aunties created a Word Cloud Personal Reflection Tool tracker, where they entered client responses alongside clinical notes, which helped them assess healing over time and further respond to emergent client needs.

Personal Reflection Toolkit

A similar set of challenges arose in our work with Yéil Koowú Shaawát (Raven Tail Woman) curriculum. Our work with Yéil Koowú Shaawát exemplifies the iterative process to identify information-gathering processes that work best for the program you're evaluating. For the Center team to get it right, we first had to fail.

Initial Design

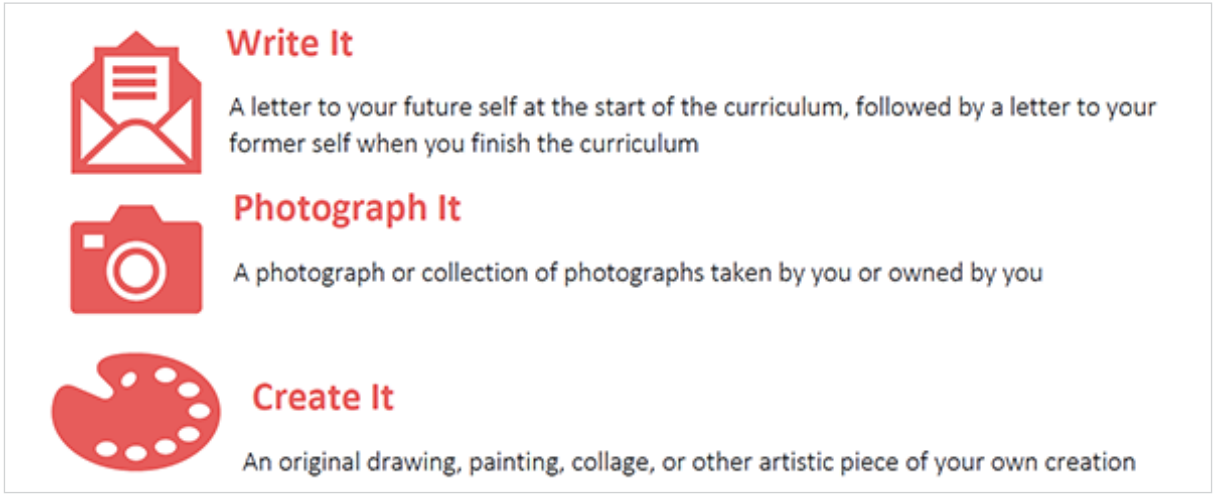
We worked with our partners to adapt an existing survey instrument that the program creator had implemented over the years. We updated the instrument, piloted it with program participants, and asked for feedback. The tool represented evaluation priorities established through ongoing work together and built on the existing open-ended entry and exit survey the facilitator used to gather feedback from previous groups. It included 15 open-ended questions to understand women's healing after engaging in the curriculum. After piloting the revised tool, we asked the women how they felt about the tool and whether it accomplished our desired intent (i.e., to understand who they were at the start of their healing journey and again after they exited the program).

We quickly learned that the open-ended tool was flawed and would not be an appropriate tool to use in the community. The women felt it did not provide ample space to truly respond to the questions and limited their ability to convey their stories in meaningful, culturally relevant ways. When asked how they'd prefer to share their stories, group members said using talking circles because of the safety of the small group interactions. They also preferred to share their stories through more creative formats (e.g., open-ended storytelling; nonlinear visual approaches that cross language barriers, such as photography, poetry, or painting).

Redesigned Tool

In the weeks that followed, the Center team used the feedback to co-develop a **personal reflection toolkit** designed to support the evaluation and to better understand (1) how the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum affected the lives of women and their families and (2) the healing journey, along with their hopes, fears, and dreams. The toolkit provided women with options to share their stories in one of three formats at entry and exit from the program: photos, letters to future and former selves, or artwork.

We designed the toolkit for personal reflections activities at the beginning of their participation and then again at the end, reflecting on hopes and personal goals at the time of entry and upon graduation and completion of the curriculum. To better understand what the personal reflections represent and how they related to their time in group, a **meaning-making interview** would follow each personal reflection. This methodology allowed creativity and responsiveness to the feedback but also served as an avenue to deep understanding of the individual and collective healing journey beyond what a survey tool would have found.



MEANING MAKING

Given the tools the Center used, including mind mapping and storytelling approaches, some of the material gathered took the form of artistic expression (e.g., drawings, letters to oneself) and stories. In addition, a common issue with outsiders conducting research in Tribal communities has been that the researchers misunderstand or misinterpret the significance of various information, leading to misleading or false research findings. To ensure the appropriate understanding of the mind maps and stories, while avoiding the latter issue, we engaged in "meaning-making" discussions with participants and knowledge holders to get their explanations of the significance of these materials and the preliminary results.

Women felt empowered to tell their stories in a manner that connected for them, whether through art or writing. Being able to choose how to share is especially important for trauma survivors, whose previous experiences are often associated with a lack of control or choices. These methods provided insight into women's developing resilience, particularly around decision-making skills, nonviolent communication skills, respect for self and others, stress-management strategies, and planning for and taking steps to realize a positive future.

Gathering Appropriate Permissions

We discussed previously some of the considerations related to sovereignty that researchers need to address. However, there are many varieties of permissions, institution and community based, that researchers might need to consider. Seeking permission provides an avenue for demonstrating respect for a community and for its members. This is acutely true for the community-based research/evaluation, in which the community has experienced research exploitation and the researcher plans to work directly with members of the community.

As noted in the Reciprocity section, the academic researcher's orientation to research ethics that only centers informed consent is not enough to build a reciprocal and consensual research relationship with Indigenous peoples and communities. Consequently, the obligations on researchers to pursue community-based permissions are at least as strong (if not stronger than) the obligations on researchers to pursue institution-based (e.g., Tribal Research Review Board [TRRB], Tribal Institutional Review Board [IRB]) permissions.

Institution-based Permissions

A few varieties of institution-based permission may be necessary, depending on the community researchers are working with and the type of research they are doing. Tribal governments may need to approve research, whether through a Tribal council or an IRB. Participants will need to offer informed consent. Any facilities also will likely need to give permission.

To understand the potential complexity here, consider what might be a relatively simple question: Who needs to approve the research I'm doing? There are a number of different approval channels researchers should explore. For example, the Tribal Council or Chairperson may require a Tribal resolution (a legislative mechanism used to express a Tribe's position on federal, state, local, or Tribal issues) authorizing the proposed research project. In addition, some Tribes may have a local TRRB that reviews proposed research projects involving the community. TRRBs are more common than Tribal IRBs and serve as delegates of Tribal councils in dealing with research. However, TRRBs are not IRBs, and the Tribe may require approval from an IRB for work to proceed. Some Tribes have their own HHS-registered Tribal IRBs. Researchers using data or personnel from the Indian Health Service (IHS) will also need IHS IRB approval—and they may still need separate approval from the Tribe.[iv]

iv The IHS maintains a list of IHS and Tribal IRBs at https://www.ihs.gov/dper/research/hsrp/instreviewboards, and for more information about human subject research protections at the IHS, see https://www.ihs.gov/dper/research/hsrp.

Other Community-Based Permissions

Researchers should also seek other forms of community-based permissions. For example, the Native American Center for Excellence (NACE) suggests that researchers get "to know the tribal communities and establish relationships early on with elders and spiritual leaders who can serve as mentors, guides, and facilitators throughout the evaluation."[28] This is essential both because elders and spiritual leaders are community knowledge bearers, and cultivating these relationships can help create and reinforce a sense of reciprocity between the researchers and the community, resulting in better outcomes.

For these community-based permissions, it will be important to practice ongoing consent; that is, treat "getting consent from subjects" not as satisfied by a one-time action at the beginning of research (e.g., as informed consent forms signed by subjects), but rather in terms of conducting ongoing check-ins with people to ensure that they remain both informed and consenting.

It is also essential for researchers to remember that norms regarding recordings (broadly construed to include photography and videography), intellectual property (particularly copyright), and even occupying space (some of which may be sacred) might be different than what researchers are familiar with. Indeed, they may differ by community. The relationship between documentary efforts and AI/AN populations is one fraught with the same concerns about colonialism that infect Western inquiry in Indian Country.[v] Researchers will need to inquire about what they can record and what places might be off limits. Some Tribes provide high-level guidance online (e.g., the websites of the Quileute Tribe https://quileutenation.org/indian-country-etiquette and of the Squaxin Island Tribe https://squaxinisland.org/visitors/native-american-etiquette).

Gather Information

Building partnerships provides a foundation for the work of your collaboration around evaluation or research. Now you need to consider how to build on the trust you've developed as a part of this partnership, while conducting the research/evaluation activities.

Working with communities whose experiences with evaluators and researchers have fostered a skepticism and apprehension about evaluation and research requires being intentional about how you interact with the people in those communities. Gathering the information necessary for this work will require you to *be present, be prepared to fail forward, and not underestimate the role of trust and empathy in communication*. Authentic relationships based on mutual trust support better information-gathering processes.

The prior section gave examples of information-gathering sources and strategies that take a participatory approach. Implementing them in a similar manner requires preparation and training, especially if you plan to employ local staff or community members to gather information.

The level of community engagement will vary depending on the capacity, desires, and needs of the community you're working with. Remember, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to participatory evaluation work. Engagement exists along a spectrum, as Exhibit 8 shows. It is important to periodically check-in with your partners to ensure the level of engagement reflects what they want and need. Our work often reflected subtle shifts in engagement or participation during certain phases of the evaluation or in response to local variables. For example, sometimes local issues arise that require community partners to temporarily pull back from engagement.

Exhibit 8: Spectrum of Engagement

v For example, see: Meier, A. C. (2018, March 19). *Native Americans and the dehumanising force of the photograph*. Wellcome Collection. https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/WrUTGh8AACAA1FH8

The Center team provided information and capacity building support to the project teams on various topics before gathering information for the evaluation including:

Evaluation enrollment procedures
- » Obtain informed consent
- » Assign evaluation identifiers

Privacy and secure information transfer procedures
- » Develop best practices for access, transfer, and storage of information

Information-gathering procedures
- » Develop a checklist
- » Include detailed chronological steps

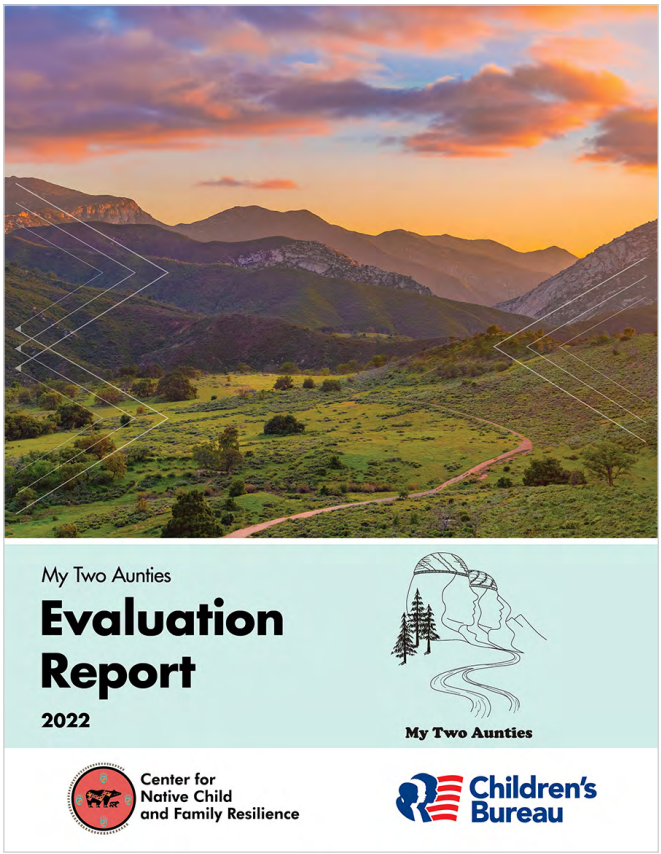
Evaluation process flow and task assignments
- » Develop evaluation process flow and task assignment schedule
- » Create evaluation data tracker

Tell the Story

Our Approach

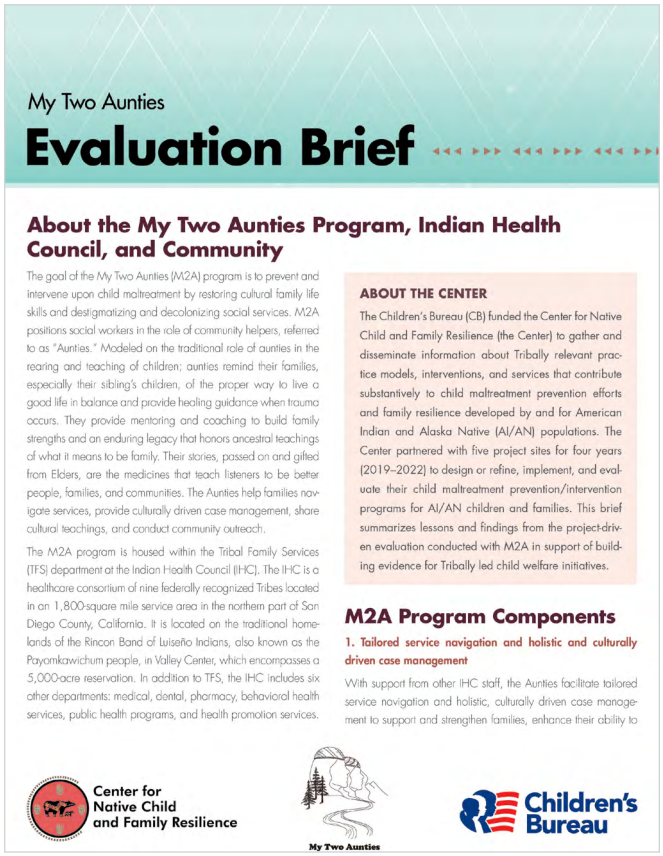
When it comes to analyzing and reporting what you learn from an evaluation, there is often pressure to assign a particular value (e.g., success, failure) or to reduce the findings to discrete "outcomes" of interest. "Outcomes" confers a static result, effect, or product. That is not how we understand or employ this term in the context of our work or in the reports we produced with our partners. Our reports reflect the story of the process we took and are the sacred healing stories of the communities and people we worked with. They were gathered with the utmost intention to honor the lived experience, wisdom, and healing power they contain.

To generate evaluation reports, the Center took a storytelling approach. We wanted our reports to have high utility and to reflect important evaluation findings, but, perhaps most importantly, to accurately reflect the evaluation journey we took with our partners and the community or program it represented. To this end, we engaged our partners during the analysis and reporting phases of our evaluation work. Once again, the spectrum of engagement varied depending on the capacity, needs, and desire of our partners.[vi]



vi Review an example evaluation report at: https://cncfr.jbsinternational.com/sites/default/files/uploads/CNCFR_Tlingit%26Haida_Evaluation%20Report.pdf.

You may also consider creating a concise evaluation brief or executive summary that highlights key evaluation priorities and findings for your partners. In our experience, because story-driven evaluation reports are lengthy, it is often beneficial to have a concise evaluation brief or executive summary to support the dissemination needs of community partners. Evaluation briefs are an efficient and high-utility way to share evaluation findings with a cross-section of potential audiences, including local partners, funders, and other Tribal communities.[vii]



My Two Aunties

Evaluation Brief

About the My Two Aunties Program, Indian Health Council, and Community

The goal of the My Two Aunties (M2A) program is to prevent and intervene upon child maltreatment by restoring cultural family life skills and destigmatizing and decolonizing social services. M2A positions social workers in the role of community helpers, referred to as "Aunties." Modeled on the traditional role of aunties in the rearing and teaching of children; aunties remind their families, especially their sibling's children, of the proper way to live a good life in balance and provide healing guidance when trauma occurs. They provide mentoring and coaching to build family strengths and an enduring legacy that honors ancestral teachings of what it means to be family. Their stories, passed on and gifted from Elders, are the medicines that teach listeners to be better people, families, and communities. The Aunties help families navigate services, provide culturally driven case management, share cultural teachings, and conduct community outreach.

The M2A program is housed within the Tribal Family Services (TFS) department at the Indian Health Council (IHC). The IHC is a healthcare consortium of nine federally recognized Tribes located in an 1,800-square mile service area in the northern part of San Diego County, California. It is located on the traditional homelands of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, also known as the Payomkawichum people, in Valley Center, which encompasses a 5,000-acre reservation. In addition to TFS, the IHC includes six other departments: medical, dental, pharmacy, behavioral health services, public health programs, and health promotion services.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Children's Bureau (CB) funded the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (the Center) to gather and disseminate information about Tribally relevant practice models, interventions, and services that contribute substantively to child maltreatment prevention efforts and family resilience developed by and for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations. The Center partnered with five project sites for four years (2019–2022) to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention/intervention programs for AI/AN children and families. This brief summarizes lessons and findings from the project-driven evaluation conducted with M2A in support of building evidence for Tribally led child welfare initiatives.

M2A Program Components

1. Tailored service navigation and holistic and culturally driven case management

With support from other IHC staff, the Aunties facilitate tailored service navigation and holistic, culturally driven case management to support and strengthen families, enhance their ability to

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

My Two Aunties

Children's Bureau

STORYTELLING IS CRUCIAL IN EVALUATIONS WITH TRIBAL COMMUNITIES BECAUSE:

1. It aligns with Indigenous oral traditions and ways of sharing knowledge.
2. It allows for a holistic representation of program impacts, capturing nuances that quantitative data alone might miss.
3. It honors the voices and experiences of community members, promoting a more equitable and culturally responsive evaluation process.
4. Stories can convey complex, intergenerational effects and cultural contexts that are often central to Tribal programs.
5. It helps bridge cultural gaps, making findings more accessible and meaningful to both Tribal and non-Tribal audiences.
6. Storytelling can be a healing and empowering process for participants, aligning with many Tribal programs' goals of promoting community wellbeing.

By centering storytelling, evaluators can gather richer, more culturally relevant insights while respecting and reinforcing traditional knowledge-sharing practices.

vii Review the project evaluation briefs in Appendix K.

Inclusive and Transparent Analysis

The principles of inclusivity and transparency should be maintained through the process of interpreting the data collected during the evaluation process. When we take steps to organize, analyze, and interpret data—especially when drawing conclusions—we prioritize and make decisions and may unintentionally incorporate our own biases, neglecting to recognize important information and to make connections. One strategy for mitigating this is engaging community members in analysis. Getting different perspectives on the meaning and importance of data will lead to more accurate conclusions and open up different interpretations and explanations. This is especially important when analyzing and interpreting qualitative information steeped in local IWOK.

Tribal communities and researchers should jointly host meaning-making sessions with research participants, key stakeholders, or the community at large once data collection and analysis is complete. This provides an opportunity for researchers to transparently share results and to explain their process for interpreting findings to the community, while also empowering the community to provide input, feedback, and recommended corrections.

Example: Healing Village

As an example of this, in support of the evaluation for the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, Yéil Koowú Shaawát Program, a community-based group was convened to support the process of validation and meaning making from the gathered evaluation information. Known as the Healing Village, the group, composed of recent alumni of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát program, a local Tlingit elder and knowledge bearer, program facilitators, and Center team members, met to review the preliminary findings, reflect on the language used to describe the journey of participants, and provide oversight in ensuring appropriate understanding of the information and accurate application of the findings to better understand the program and its impact on the community. Through facilitated talking circles held using an online platform, the Healing Village members engaged in reflection and storytelling in response to high-level summaries of program outcomes. In assembling the information gathered to understand the program's effects on the community, it can be helpful to engage the community by requesting that community members and program staff review the gathered materials and offer additional meaning and context for them. When working with TFYS on Yéil Koowú Shaawát, we discussed several engagement options that ranged in degrees of community ownership, engagement, and depth of participation. It became clear that the Center's deep community engagement should be maintained through the analysis and reporting period, so we worked with the program and the community to convene an advisory group, which chose the name "Healing Village" for itself, comprising recent graduates and current participants of the women's group, the facilitator, co-facilitator, and a local Tlingit elder during the final phase of the evaluation.

In the short term, as the Center team prepared information for analysis and conducted an initial thematic analysis of information sources, the Healing Village's role would be to:

- Ensure accuracy of initial evaluation findings (Did we get the story right?)
- Prioritize findings (What elements of the story should we highlight or emphasize?)
- Add depth, context, and nuance to findings (Where should we dig deeper?)
- Address unanswered questions and clarify interpretation of findings (Is this cultural concept or experience accurate?)
- Identify emergent themes or gaps in our analysis (What do you see, and what is missing?)

Based on feedback we received, the Center team prioritized initial findings the Healing Village identified as important, incorporated themes emerging from the meetings, and adjusted and reframed initial findings to ensure accuracy. After several weeks of additional review and collaboration, we solidified a set of cross-cutting findings derived from evaluation information sources and input from the Healing Village meetings.

The long-term role of the Healing Village was to share stories of healing and to strengthen cultural resilience in the broader community and in Indian Country at large. In addition, the Healing Village's involvement served as a vehicle for ensuring the fidelity and integrity of the curriculum as implemented, while educating community leadership to carry the message and lessons of women's experiences forward to benefit others and future generations.

Sharing Your Story

As the research or evaluation project comes to a close, you'll be thinking about the types of products to generate. You'll want to continue applying culturally responsive practices during this phase of the process.

Developing and disseminating project resources will involve considerations of the audience and the purpose of each resource to ensure you will meet your goals and have an impact with the desired audiences. Your partners on this journey will also want to share findings, lessons learned, and success stories with their communities and with others invested in the project and its outcomes. Individual resources and approaches help fulfill a larger dissemination plan.[viii] This is an opportunity to ensure your strategy is based on an understanding of the communities you collaborate with and their information needs and preferences. As always, we recommend engaging with communities to participate in or guide these processes, so resources are culturally responsive and tailored to their strengths and needs. This is also a time to demonstrate respect and to be sensitive to community rights to control the dissemination of their intellectual and cultural property.[29]

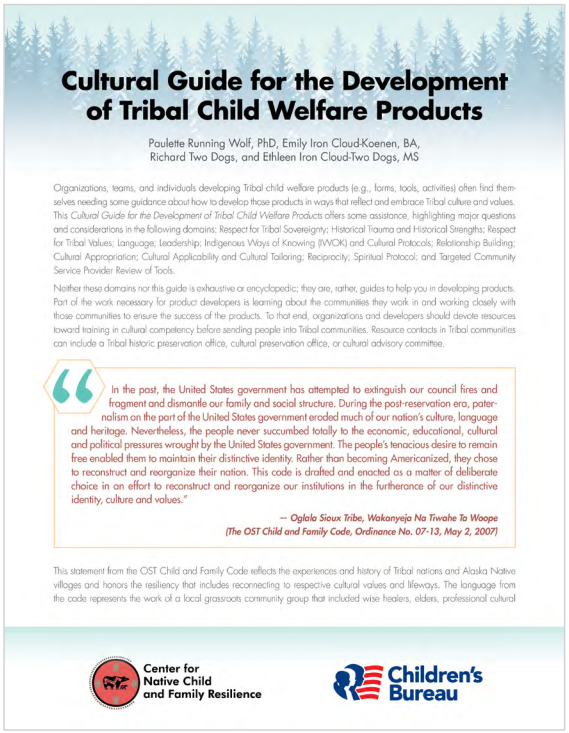
viii Comprehensive dissemination planning guidance can be found elsewhere. Along with The Cultural Guide for the Development of Tribal Child Welfare Products you may wish to review the Community-Centered Dissemination Toolkit by Program in Health Disparities Research (PHDR) and Clinical and Translational Science Institute Community Engagement to Advance Research and Community Health (CTSI/CEARCH).

As always, when developing products, consider your audience. There's an opportunity to practice reciprocity with the community by "giving back" products that will have utility for the community. You may wish to prioritize products that incorporate storytelling, video, audio, and photography over reports with dense narratives.

Building on the principle of reciprocity, the dissemination stage is an opportunity to consider how to give back to the community. Look for ways to return print and electronic copies of the resources developed through the project. Consider which products are likely to have practical utility, but also remember that Tribal communities will want to celebrate and share their successes just as your organization would—posters and marketing materials will have value as well. For Center partner Tribes, posters of mind maps and other visualizations of projects' cultural metaphors were among the most appreciated products.

CULTURAL GUIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE PRODUCTS

The Cultural Guide provides guidance to organizations, teams, and individuals developing Tribal child welfare products about how to develop them in ways that reflect and embrace Tribal culture and values. It helps product and tool developers retrieve and incorporate cultural knowledge, while serving as an instrument that helps to assure that products developed collaboratively with these communities include the acknowledgement and recognition of their contributions to the fields of child welfare, education, social services, research, and evaluation. A valuable resource to guide the development of dissemination products, it contains sets of questions organized around 12 domains that help assess if a given resource will honor respective cultural and community beliefs. Remember that these questions should be considered throughout the planning, development, and implementation of any resource, not only at the stages of your project focused on dissemination.



CONCLUSION

Collaborating successfully with Tribes and Tribal communities requires researchers, evaluators, and TA providers to make plans and to do work that takes us beyond our status quo. This means we need to take special care to prepare ahead of time, focus on building trustful relationships, and be prepared to change course and adapt our approaches along the way. In this guide, we've attempted to explain what we've learned from partnering with Tribes—how to do this. However, one of our insights is that perhaps "being there" is what it takes to learn and grow.

We hope to share this information to further influence the use of IWOK as a means of conducting culturally competent and community-based evaluations in Indian Country. We also hope this will be an opportunity to learn more about how evidence of success and impact in communities can look different, and when we think about using IWOK as a means of collecting information, it can be just as rigorous as a Western-based evaluation. Federal funding opportunities for Tribes can support this with expectations for evaluations to be based on community values and conducted in a manner respectful of community norms, values, traditions, and beliefs.

The information found within this guide in no way suggests that the experiences and techniques that you have learned conducting program evaluation throughout the years should be forgotten. One thing this work teaches you is that all techniques, designs, ideas, and suggestions are important and tend to serve you well as you progress on your journey as an evaluator. Thus, the importance of possessing a toolbox of diverse techniques, tools, and guides is an important aspect of successful job completion.

Our belief is that mindfully strengthening our own practices can contribute to the goal of improving outcomes for Native children and families. We wish you well on your journey, one that we hope will lead to new, valuable, and enriching experiences while supporting this goal.

READY TO PUT THESE PRACTICES INTO ACTION? HERE ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS:

1. **Reflect:** Consider how these approaches align with your current practices. Identify areas where you can make immediate changes.
2. **Learn**: Deepen your understanding of Indigenous Ways of Knowing. Seek out resources, workshops, or mentors in this field.
3. **Connect:** Reach out to Tribal communities or organizations you wish to work with. Begin building relationships before proposing any projects.
4. **Plan:** Develop a strategy for incorporating these practices into you next project. Consider how you'll assess community readiness and build trust.
5. **Collaborate:** When starting a project, involve the Tribal partners from the very beginning. Prioritize their input in all stages of planning and implementation.
6. **Adapt:** Be prepared to adjust your approach based on community feedback. Flexibility is key to successful collaboration.
7. **Share:** As you gain experience, share your learnings with colleagues. Help spread these practices within your professional network.
8. **Advocate:** Push for policies and funding practices that support culturally responsive, collaborative evaluation in Tribal communities.

Remember, implementing these practices is an ongoing journey of learning and growth. Start where you are, remain open to guidance, and commit to continuous improvement in your work with Tribal communities.

RESOURCES

Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK)

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IWOK: Reciprocity

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APPENDICES

- **Appendix A:** About the Two Bears Logo
- **Appendix B:** Teaming Agreement Template
- **Appendix C:** Center Terms of Art
- **Appendix D:** Community Readiness Assessment
- **Appendix E:** Guided Story Telling Framework Tool
- **Appendix F:** Pathway to Change
- **Appendix G:** Project Work Plan Template
- **Appendix H:** Legacy Planning Tool
- **Appendix I:** Community Driven Evaluation Planning Tool
- **Appendix J:** Sample Evaluation Plan
- **Appendix K:** Center Project Evaluation Briefs

Appendix A: About the Two Bears Logo

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

We are excited about this opportunity to celebrate our work together and to share what we have learned and accomplished. We know that the work of the project sites has contributed to the resilience and well-being of Indigenous children and families and that sharing these efforts will only serve to benefit the field.

The Two Bears Logo was developed in the early stages of the CNCFR project. Read on to learn more about the symbolic meaning of the logo's design elements.

About the Two Bears Logo:

In the ways of many Tribal Nations and Native people, the bear is a symbol of both healing and nurturance, representing teachings about the bear in both medicine and the healing of wounds; it is the bear that teaches the medicines of healing wounds and injury. The Center logo invokes the concept of the bear's medicine in the healing of wounds in individuals, families, and communities.

The Two Bears logo depicts a healing of family: the mother bear and cub symbolize the very essence of parenting, the power of women, and the power of new life. The logo recognizes the strengths of mothers and grandmothers in guiding the family, which carried the family ways and traditions throughout the generations. The walk of the bears signifies maternal guidance and resilience moving the family forward in the survivance and nurturance of resilience, which is the driving force of the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience.

The designs on the bears represent the passage of family patterns and designs, which we see on baskets and in lodge designs and ledger art. The two paths of lightning on the bears represent the medicine of lightning, indicating the power of family responsibilities and ways of caring for one another. The four paws of the logo represent the four directions or winds, which feed the life of the family as teachings, medicine, traditions, and purity of heart. The patterns on the paws represent the symbols emanate from the foundational creation stories, songs, and teachings. The red clay background of the logo symbolizes the red earth, the red medicine that is so vital to our ties to the earth and our mother of origin.

The patterns around the logo symbolize the traditions of family and the caring of community handed down through the ages. The circle of patterns around the edge is incomplete, in recognition of the children and families that are missing from their rightful place and of the cultural responsibilities due to surviving historical tragedies—especially the removal of children from their cultural ways of family. The solid circle around the red background symbolizes the unbroken resolve and resilience built from the cultural ways of caring for family and one another, which will never end.

Appendix B: Teaming Agreement Template

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

Teaming Agreement

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

I. Parties

This Teaming Agreement is entered into between the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience and _____[Name of Project]_____.

II. Background

As part of a Children's Bureau initiative to raise awareness of Tribally engaged prevention and intervention efforts, the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (CNCFR) seeks to partner with Indian Tribes on the prevention and intervention of child abuse and neglect in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience will gather, generate, and disseminate knowledge regarding effective practice models for strengths-based, culturally relevant, trauma-informed, and preventive services and interventions for all forms of child maltreatment.

The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience works in partnership with Tribal communities to:

- Honor effective Tribal community and practice-based models of prevention;
- Promote awareness and use of culturally relevant child maltreatment prevention services that are supported by practice-based evidence in Tribal child welfare systems;
- Improve holistic services for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children affected by child abuse and neglect;
- Develop models of cultural, community, and trauma resilience;
- Implement and assess practice models that show promise in preventing child abuse and neglect and that may be implemented or adapted in other tribal child welfare systems; and
- Contribute to the increased knowledge of cultural practice models across Indian Country, through information sharing of findings, processes, outputs and lessons learned by the Center through the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program models, to inform the field of child welfare.

III. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Teaming Agreement is to list the responsibilities and deliverables of the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience and the _____[Name of Project]_____ to support and enhance resilience-related approaches to Tribal child welfare intervention and prevention toward developing evidence-supported strategies of care.

IV. Responsibilities under this Teaming Agreement

The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

In the current project, the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience will:

- Work with the tribal community or organization where the project is occurring to identify the type of expertise and the resources needed that fit the specific needs of the Tribe to support the capacity building plan;
- Work collaboratively with and support the tribal community or organization in identifying and selecting subject matter experts and resources needed for the project and coordinate the access to the experts and resources as feasible;
- Provide support and assistance to the sites through intensive training, technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen the infrastructure required to implement and evaluate services or models at the selected sites;
- Work in partnership with the Tribal community to plan activities and interventions that will help achieve desired outcomes and timelines for the planned project;
- Stand with the Tribal community in an inclusive and participatory process to develop a Theory of Change, Impact model, and community driven project and evaluation plan;
- Provide on-site assistance, other support for project implementation and community-based evaluation;
- Participate in ongoing support and communication with the community on project progress and respond to changing project needs;
- Update project work plans a minimum of every six months;
- Assist in analyzing process and outcome evaluation data in collaboration with the tribal community; and
- Consult with the Tribal community or organizations in the compiling of any submissions for consideration of a tribally identified Institutional Review Board (IRB).

One of the purposes of the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience and subsequent projects is to raise awareness of and build upon the substantial history of Indian Tribes' and native communities' efforts promoting the resilience of Tribal families through culturally founded and community-implemented prevention strategies. As such, specific products created in support of this purpose, and knowledge gained from this work, will be made publicly available to provide other Tribes with resources to support their communities and positively impact the lives of their children and families. These products include but are not limited to interventions, processes, project reports, evaluation reports, presentations, and practices.

Project Site

During the project implementation, the selected project site will:

- Determine, implement and facilitate onsite activities to assess the project or model as proposed;
- Direct onsite planning sessions to develop or address community determined processes of implementing a model of resilience building which may include a community defined Theory of Change, Logic Model, and workplan design;
- Implement workplan activities with support from Center for Native Child and Family Resilience staff and consultants;
- Maintain regular contact and communication with Center for Native Child and Family Resilience staff and consultants and respond to changing project needs;

- Implement and govern activities to evaluate the project effectiveness, such as interviews, surveys, and focus groups. This may include retaining and gathering project specific data which may require the consideration of a tribally identified Institutional Review Board (IRB).
- Collaborate with the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience in developing documents or information to guide other projects across Indian Country who desire to replicate the model or practice of focus for this selected project.

V. Data Management

The success of this project depends on a close collaboration between The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience and tribal communities. The tribal community organization or Tribe will retain and respect the confidentiality of all materials specific to data management as outlined by a tribally identified Institutional Review Board (IRB). All research and evaluation processes will be reviewed and monitored through an IRB process to ensure the protection of data and sensitive information. The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience recognizes the right of the project to exercise authority over and ownership of any raw data files resulting from the project's evaluation. However, any evaluation reports resulting from the data will be publicly available. The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience will notify the project of any requests, during the life of the cooperative agreement, to use project data by outside parties. It will then be up to the project's leadership to authorize release of any data to that outside party. This Teaming Agreement is designed to achieve a community driven collaborative effort. Principles of data sovereignty (the right of a nation to collect and manage its own data) and data governance (the ownership, collection, control, analysis, and use of data) are a key part of this effort and include:

- **Ownership** refers to the relationship of an Indigenous community to its cultural knowledge, data, and information. The principle states that a community or group owns confidential information collectively in the same way that an individual owns his or her personal information.
- **Control** asserts that Indigenous communities and representative bodies are within their rights to control research and information management processes which affect them, including all stages of evaluation.
- **Access** refers to the right of Indigenous people to access information and data about themselves and their communities regardless of where these are held, and to make decisions regarding access to their collective information.
- **Possession** refers to the actual custody and holding of the data. It is distinguished from ownership for being more literal in its understanding.

Communities decide the content of data collected about them, and who has access to these data;

- Why is a given data set created? What stories is it used to tell? What stories should it tell? Who should be doing the telling and how?
- Data sovereignty for Indigenous peoples must reflect the interests and priorities of Indigenous peoples. For example, forming data and performance measures which furthers the vision, objectives, and cultural context community model.
- There will be different approaches to data sovereignty across Nations. Nations themselves need to define their data parameters, how it gets protected and how they wish to tell their story historically, today, and into the future.

The Center agrees to:	The [Tribal Community/Program] agrees to:
• Respect program participants, including but not limited to program staff, community leaders and members, children, and their families. - The Center will involve appropriate tribal project and community members at each phase of the project. - The goal is to create a partnership that benefits both parties and, most importantly, the children and families of the community.	• Work with the Center team to achieve the goals of the project site. - Work together to plan for and complete all data collection activities. - Provide guidance to the Center team in how to work effectively and respectfully with members of the tribal community, including its leaders, program staff, children, and families.
• Protect the privacy of all project participants, programs, and tribal communities. - All Center team staff working with the project site will sign confidentiality agreements. - Center team training will include the importance of protecting the privacy of every participant, program, and tribal community and the consequences of breaching the agreement, including dismissal from the Center team. - Not release any identifying information specific to the Tribe or individuals. All tribal and individual identifiers specific to the tribal organization, community or the reservation will be removed as needed and appropriate except as necessary to promote the work of the project. - Data on laptop computers will be secured through hard drive encryption as well as operation and survey system configuration and a password. Any computer files that contain this information also will be locked and password protected. If applicable, the Center team will remove from all completed questionnaires personal identifiers that could be used to link individuals with their responses. All hard copy questionnaires will be stored under lock and key. - The Center will assure ownership of data by the tribal community or agency therefore the Center efforts will assist only in the digesting and interpretation of data collected.	• Protect the privacy of all project participants, the program, and the tribal community. - Protect the identities of the children and families participating in the project. - Will not share information about project participants with anyone outside of the program, with the exception of the Center team staff working with the project site. - Recognize that confidential information relating to individual, program, and community-level data or findings will not be shared with anyone.
• Work with project site to obtain tribal or any indicated approval for the program's participation in the Center. - Work with the project site to identify the required steps for tribal review and approval. - Center team staff and members of the Workgroup will present the project in person or by phone at the request of tribal authorities and will provide an informational fact sheet for sharing with the community.	• Work with Center team staff to obtain tribal or any indicated approval for the program's participation in the Center. - Identify the tribal review and approval process and assist in presenting the project to tribal officials responsible for review and approval of the program's participation. - Share information about the Center and its goals with members of the tribal community.

The Center agrees to:	The [Tribal Community/Program] agrees to:
• Support data collection in a manner that is respectful of tribal customs and practices and is least disruptive to programs' daily routines. - Schedule data collection visits being cognizant of not disrupting any tribal community celebrations or events. - Be flexible in working with programs and their day-to-day activities. - Recognize that Center team staff are guests in the community.	• Work with the Center team to ensure that all data collection is respectful of program staff, children, and families and limits disruptions to day-to-day program activities and routines. Program staff, children, and families will be given enough advance notice of data collection activities to ensure all questions and concerns are addressed. - Provide information to Center team regarding appropriate verbal and nonverbal communications styles.
• Partner with the project leads to identify opportunities for dissemination of reports, briefs, and presentations of findings to program staff, families, and other tribal communities. Project sites will determine how best to share reports, briefs, etc. with participants and others in the community. - Partner with the project and collaboratively present any reports of findings or interpretation by the Center team. Communities agree that these presentations can be shared by the Center and the Children's Bureau. - Such presentations or reports be posted on the Center and Children's Bureau's websites to facilitate access by programs, tribal communities, and others. - Identify the desire for and assist with scheduling presentations to the field of services development and other tribal communities on results or findings in collaboration with the project and/or members of the Workgroup.	• Partner with the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience to identify opportunities to disseminate reports, briefs, and presentations of findings to program staff, families, and other tribal communities. Project sites will determine how best to share reports, briefs, etc. with participants and others in the community. - Partner with the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience and collaboratively present any reports of findings or interpretation by the Center team. Communities agree that these presentations can be shared by the Center and the Children's Bureau. - Such presentations or reports be posted on the Center and Children's Bureau's websites to facilitate access by programs, tribal communities, and others. - Identify the desire for and assist with scheduling presentations to the field of services development and other tribal communities on results or findings in collaboration with the Center team and/or members of the Workgroup.

VI. It is mutually understood and agreed by and between the parties that:

If for some unforeseen reason the __[Name of Project]__ is unable to complete the activities as outlined in the project workplan, the Project is asked to immediately notify the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience indicating the Project's desire to discontinue the work; there will be no penalty for discontinuing. However, when it appears that some circumstance may prevent the Project from completing the activities in the project workplan, the Project is encouraged to quickly begin discussions with its Center for Native Child and Family Resilience Project Lead to explore alternatives or remedies.

VII. Effective Date and Signature

By signing below, the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience and _[Name of Project]_ signify their mutual commitment to work together to complete the agreed upon project.

[Tribal Program]	**Center for Native Child and Family Resilience**
[Signature]	[Signature]
[Title]	[Title]
[Date]	[Date]

Appendix C: Center Terms of Art

Center for
Native Child
and Family Resilience

Terms of Art

As our work developed, we started using the following terms as specialized terms of art or shorthand for longer expressions that we didn't want to keep repeating—especially throughout the interminable video meetings of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to serving as a shorthand, these terms and concepts helped CNCFR move away from Western approaches to our activities and toward more culturally responsive ones that center the communities' we were working with. In much the same way that we understand that words matter in, e.g., the context of stigma and substance use disorder, we understood that many of the words we used at the outset are bound to histories of trauma and so were to be avoided. In addition, the use of these terms rather than their Western analogues served to remind us that we were not doing "business as usual"; instead, we needed to be intentional about doing this work, and using these terms signaled to ourselves and others to heed the context and proceed accordingly.

Note: The glosses here are provided to give a sense of the terms rather than a complete lexicographic entry; others may use the terms differently.

- **Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK):** IWOK are the practices, tools, methods, beliefs, etc. that Indigenous cultures have used for knowledge making and sharing since time immemorial. Because each Tribe may have different epistemic norms or practices, CNCFR spent time with each project discussing what success would look like for the program, who the knowledge bearers in the community are, how to measure program outcomes, etc. For more information, visit: https://cncfr.jbsinternational.com/IWOK

- **Information Gathering:** Where traditional Western approaches to research and evaluation address themselves to "data collection", we took to talking in terms of "information gathering" instead. There were a few reasons for this. First, the history of settler research in Indian Country is replete with troubling and unethical research practices; sadly, this is not merely historical, but includes at least some of the contemporary context. For better or worse, the use of the expression "data collection" is closely associated with those practices, and if we could take small steps to avoid contributing to this trauma while doing our work, we thought we should. Second, there are some who distinguish "data" from "information", with the former being "raw" or "uninterpreted" (especially quantitative data) and the latter being something like, "data transformed through analysis." Because we were seeking a holistic understanding of the efficacy of programs (i.e., how they affected community well-being in addition to how they affected participants) and using IWOK (esp. meaning making interviews with Elders and other knowledge-holders), talk of "data collection" felt reductive. Conceiving of our work as "information gathering" allowed us to avoid terms tied to historical trauma while conveying the sense to the communities we worked with that they had knowledge that we would gather in one place, synthesize, and share back with them.

- **Meaning Making:** Given the tools CNCFR used, including mind mapping and storytelling approaches, some of the material gathered took the form of artistic expression (e.g., drawings, letters to oneself) and stories. In addition, a common issue with outsiders conducting research in Tribal communities has been that the researchers misunderstand or misinterpret the significance of various data, leading to misleading or false research findings. Ensure the apt understanding of the mind maps and stories while avoiding the latter issue, CNCFR engaged in "meaning making" discussions with participants and knowledge holders to get their explanations of the significance of these materials and the preliminary results. Tribal communities and researchers to jointly host meaning-making sessions with research participants, key stakeholders, or the community at large once data collection and analysis is complete, providing an opportunity for researchers to transparently share results and explain their process for interpreting findings to the community, while also empowering the community to provide their input, feedback, and recommended corrections.
- **Mind Mapping:** Mind mapping is a process that allows a group to explore ideas collectively using graphics, imagery, and metaphor. CNCFR's practice of mind mapping was grounded in the oral tradition and IWOK and involved groups working through the following steps collaboratively: creating a picture, identifying activation words, building out/expanding upon those activation words, and reflecting through collective discussion. The aim is to ultimately have the map tell the story more holistically. Mind mapping was most frequently used to identify key cultural values, theories of change, and outcomes of interest for the evaluation; often it identified cultural metaphors that informed evaluation research questions, shaped information gathering processes, and acted as a sort of Indigenous logic model for the projects.
- **Storytelling:** Because many Tribal cultures are more strongly oriented toward the oral tradition, CNCFR developed a storytelling methodology that respected the oral tradition and enabled the community to talk about their proposed program in their own words and in their own way. As part of our processes, we developed a guided storytelling tool developed in coordination with CNCFR's IWOK workgroup, which started by simply asking our new partners to tell us about their community and the story of their program.

Appendix D: Community Readiness Assessment

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

Community Readiness Assessment

Assessing community readiness for change and supporting Tribal communities to prevent and intervene in child maltreatment

August 31, 2018

Manual materials are adapted by JBS International, Inc. based on materials from the Tri Ethnic Center for Prevention Research, Community Readiness Assessment (Colorado State University) and SAMHSA Tribal Training and Technical Assistance Center, Community Readiness Manual on Suicide Prevention in Native Communities.

Table of Contents

Overview

Many prevention and intervention models in Indian Country build resilience by using Tribal cultural values, the transmission of family traditions, and the experiences of Tribal youth. Guided by these values, traditions, and experiences, Tribal communities have shown great promise in developing resilience-based models for child abuse prevention. The experiences of Tribal communities suggest that these approaches are often effective in enhancing family resilience and reducing the risks of harm to children and adults—yet rarely have these strategies used collaborative community-based evaluation to demonstrate their effectiveness.

The ***Center for Native Child and Family Resilience*** (the Center), is a partnership effort between JBS International, Inc. (JBS), the Tribal Law Policy Institute (TLPI), Mathematica Policy Research (Mathematica), and the Children's Bureau. The Center will generate and disseminate knowledge of culturally relevant practice models, interventions, and services that contribute to child maltreatment prevention.

As part of a Children's Bureau project to raise awareness of Tribally engaged prevention and intervention efforts, the Center supports and enhances resilience-related approaches to Tribal child welfare by supporting Tribes in developing and building evidence-based standards of care. The Center embraces the unique opportunity to honor these valiant community efforts that improve Native family resilience and to help empower Tribal communities of care by using culturally engaged, community-based evaluation models to demonstrate the effectiveness of these efforts and disseminate Native solutions to the field.

The Center will collaborate with Tribes, Tribal communities, and community-based organizations to develop or enhance models of effective prevention services, whether these services already exist in the community or their implementation in Indian Country appears promising. The community organizations may include social services agencies and community partners committed to the health, safety, and education of children, youth, families, and communities.

The unifying theme shared by these projects will be the community- or practice-based innovations that strengthen the Indian family and reduce risks to Indian children. The Center will work with communities to share their community or cultural strategies for prevention and resilience. This engagement and partnership will be founded on a collaborative model described in the document, *A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities* (*Roadmap)*. Importantly, the *Roadmap* provides a process for engaging Tribal community resources and expertise.

The Center will bring together the collaborative efforts of recognized experts in Tribally based prevention, evaluation, and knowledge development (i.e., Tribal research). This group of experts have experience and understanding in the areas of Tribal program development, Tribal community prevention efforts, and child welfare prevention and intervention programs that support and strengthen family and community resilience.

The experts bring to bear many avenues of knowledge development and rigor of examination. rely on quantitative and qualitative measures of effect, including Indigenous Ways of Knowing, which includes a range of epistemic approaches that embody the cultural values and world view of indigenous cultures. Indigenous Ways of Knowing can offer insight into variety of program effects and demonstrate how a constellation of factors and interventions have significant effects on prevention and care strategies.

Many prevention models in Indian Country build *resilience* by using *Tribal cultural values*, the *transmission of family traditions*, and the and experiences of *Tribal youth*. Guided by these values, traditions, and influences, Tribal community initiatives have shown great promise in developing resilience-based models for child maltreatment prevention. The experiences of Tribal communities suggest that these approaches are often effective in enhancing family resilience and reducing the risks of harm to children and adults—yet rarely have these strategies used collaborative community-based evaluation to demonstrate their effectiveness.

The ***Center for Native Child and Family Resilience*** (the Center) will support and enhance resilience-related approaches to Tribal child welfare by empowering Tribal Communities to develop evidence-based standards of care. The Center embraces the unique opportunity *to honor* these valiant community efforts that improve Native family resilience and *to help empower* Tribal communities of care by using culturally engaged, community-based evaluation models to demonstrate the effectiveness of these efforts and disseminate Native solutions to the field.

The Center readiness and evaluability onsite group (onsite team) will serve to implement to readiness and evaluability collaborations with selected communities. The onsite team is made up of a Center lead, an evaluation partner from the Center evaluative team (Mathematica), and an onsite team lead, whom is a member of the local tribal community initiative or program requesting the community based brief assessment.

Project Goals

As part of a Children's Bureau project to raise awareness of Tribally engaged prevention and intervention efforts**,** the Center will partner with Tribes to examine solutions for healing the family trauma persisting in the aftermath of the numerous historical injuries shared by many Tribal communities, including the break-up of Indian families and child removal.

The Center works in partnership with Tribal communities to:

- Honor effective Tribal community and practice-based models of prevention;
- Promote awareness and use of culturally relevant child maltreatment prevention services that are supported by practice-based evidence in Tribal child welfare systems;
- Improve holistic services for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children affected by child abuse and neglect;
- Develop models of cultural, community, and trauma resilience;
- Build the evidence-base of Tribal child welfare knowledge and practice through evaluation; and
- Transfer knowledge from project findings to the field.

What is the Community Readiness Model?

The Community Readiness Model:

Is a model for community change that…

- Integrates a community's culture, resources, and level of readiness to more effectively address child maltreatment.
- Allows communities to define issues and strategies in their own contexts.
- Builds cooperation among systems and individuals.
- Increases capacity for Tribal communities to prevent and intervene in child maltreatment.
- Encourages community investment in issues related to child maltreatment and awareness.
- Can be applied in any community (geographic, issue-based, organizational).
- Can be used to address a wide range of issues.
- Serves as a guide to the complex process of community change.

What does "readiness" mean?

Readiness is the degree to which a community is prepared to take action on an issue.

Readiness…

- Is issue-specific.
- Is measurable.
- Is measurable across multiple dimensions.
- May vary across dimensions.
- May vary across different segments of a community.
- Can be increased successfully.
- Is essential knowledge for the development of strategies and interventions.

Matching an intervention to a community's level of readiness is absolutely essential for success. Interventions must be challenging enough to move a community forward in its level of readiness. However, efforts that are too ambitious are likely to fail because community members will not be ready or able to respond. To maximize chances for successful implementation, the Community Readiness Model offers tools to measure readiness and to develop stage-appropriate strategies.

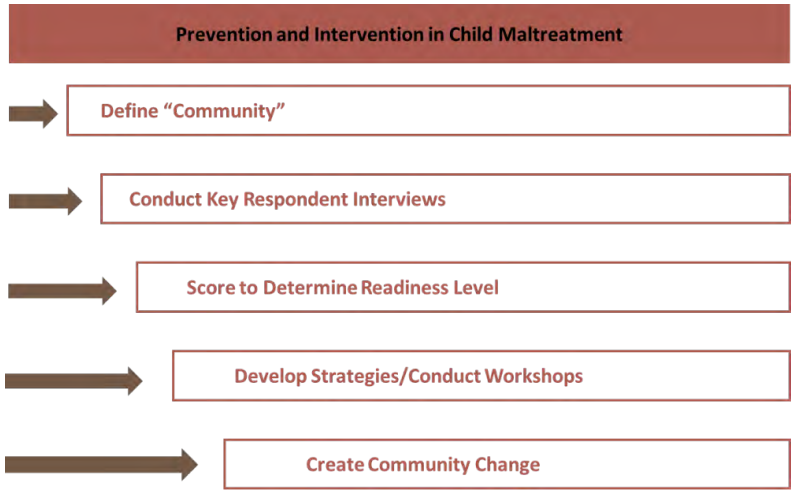
Why use the Community Readiness Model?

- The prevention and intervention of child maltreatment is a serious issue that may have barriers at various levels. The Community Readiness Model addresses this resistance.
- It conserves valuable resources (e.g., time and money) by guiding the selection of strategies that are most likely to be successful.
- It is an efficient, inexpensive, and easy-to-use tool.
- It promotes community recognition and ownership of issues related to child maltreatment.
- Because of strong community ownership, it helps to ensure that strategies are culturally congruent and sustainable.
- It encourages the use of local experts and resources instead of reliance on outside experts and resources.
- The process of community change can be complex and challenging, but the model breaks down the process into a series of manageable steps.
- It creates a community vision for healthy change

What should NOT be expected from the model?

- The model cannot make people do things they do not believe in.
- Although the model is a useful diagnostic tool, it does not prescribe the details of exactly what to do to meet your goals. The model defines types and intensity of strategies appropriate to each stage of readiness. Each community must then determine specific strategies consistent with their community's culture and level of readiness for each dimension.

Process for Using the Community Readiness Model



Step-by-Step Guide to Doing an Assessment

Step 1:

Identify your issue. In each project, the issue/project may be different. The readiness assessment will not only provide us with valuable insight into the community's perspective on the issues they are facing but will also give us information on related issues within the community. It may be that the project has already identified what the issue is believed to be. The team should analyze the project proposed to determine if it is really intended to impact the issue. Starting a project can be very exciting but knowing what issue or challenge will be addressed through the project development and implementation will guide the plans. If the project proposed does not directly address the issue facing the community, then discuss if the project proposed is the right project or if the issues the project intends to address will impact the overall change wanted by the community.

Step 2:

Define your "community." This may be a geographical area, a group within that area, an organization or any other type of identifiable "community." It could be youth, elders, a reservation area, or a system.

Step 3:

Conduct a Community Readiness Assessment using key respondent interviews to determine your community's level of readiness to address the issue you are facing.

Step 4:

Analyze the results of the assessment using both the numerical scores and the content of the interviews. Once the assessment (Step 3) is complete, you are ready to score your community's stage of readiness for each of the six dimensions (refer to next page), as well as compute your overall score.

Step 5:

Develop strategies to pursue that are stage-appropriate. For example, at low levels of readiness, the intensity of the intervention must be low key and personal.

Step 6:

Evaluate the effectiveness of your efforts. After a period of time, it is best to conduct another assessment to see how your community has progressed.

Step 7:

Utilize what you've learned to apply the model to another issue. As your community's level of readiness to address the identified issue increases, you may find it necessary to begin to address closely related issues.

Dimensions of Readiness

Dimensions of readiness are key factors that influence your community's preparedness to take action on the issue your community is facing. The six dimensions identified and measured in the Community Readiness Model are comprehensive in nature. They are an excellent tool for diagnosing your community's needs and for developing strategies that meet those needs.

A. **Community efforts:** To what extent are there efforts, programs, and policies that address the issue the community is facing?

B. **Community knowledge of the efforts:** To what extent do community members know about local efforts and their effectiveness, and are the efforts accessible to all segments of the community?

Your community's status with respect to each of the dimensions forms the basis of the overall level of community readiness.

C. **Leadership:** To what extent are appointed leaders and influential community members supportive of the project/intervention?

D. **Community climate:** What is the prevailing attitude of the community toward the project/intervention? Is it one of helplessness or one of responsibility and empowerment?

E. **Community knowledge about the issue:** To what extent do community members know about or have access to information on the issue they want to address and understand how it impacts your community?

F. **Resources related to the issue:** To what extent are local resources (people, time, money, space) available to support the prevention and/or intervention efforts?

Stages of Community Readiness

Stages of Readiness		Description
1	No Awareness	The issue is not generally recognized by the community or leaders as a problem (or it truly may not be an issue).
2	Denial/Resistance	At least some community members recognize that the issue is a concern, but there is little recognition that it might be occurring locally.
3	Vague Awareness	Most feel that there is a local concern, but there is no immediate motivation to do anything about it.
4	Preplanning	There is clear recognition that something must be done, and there may even be a group addressing it. However, efforts are not focused or detailed.
5	Preparation	Active leaders begin planning in earnest. Community offers modest support of efforts.
6	Initiation	Enough information is available to justify efforts. Activities are underway.
7	Stabilization	Activities are supported by administrators or community decision makers. Staff are trained and experienced.
8	Confirmation/Expansion	Efforts are in place. Community members feel comfortable using services, and they support expansions. Local data are regularly obtained.
9	High Level of Community Ownership	Detailed and sophisticated knowledge exists about the issue, prevalence and consequences. Effective evaluation guides new directions. Model is applied to other issues.

How to Conduct a Community Readiness Assessment

Conducting a Community Readiness Assessment is the key to determining your community's readiness by dimension and by overall stage. To perform a complete assessment, you will be asking individuals in your community the questions on the following pages. There are 30 questions, and each interview should take 30 to 60 minutes. Before you begin, please review the following guidelines:

A. Identify Community Members:

Identify individuals in your community who are committed to the issue and intervention. In some cases, it may be "politically advantageous" to interview more people. However, only eight interviews or group participants are generally needed to accurately score the community. Try to find people who represent different segments of your community. Individuals may represent:

- Health and medical professions
- Social services
- Mental health and treatment services
- Schools or universities
- Tribal, city, and county government
- Law enforcement
- Clergy or spiritual community
- Community at large, elders, or specific high-risk groups in your community
- Youth (if appropriate to do so and parent or guardian permission may be required)

B. Review and prepare

Review proposed questions for each dimension and gear them towards the particular project if appropriate. (Referred to in the following pages.)

C. Contact Interviewees

Contact the people you have identified, see if they would be willing to discuss the issue, and schedule the interview or group meeting time. Remember, each interview will take 30 to 60 minutes. Alternatively, group meetings will take 60 to 90 minutes.

D. Conduct Interviews

Avoid discussion with interviewers but ask for clarification when needed and use prompts as designated.

- Record or write responses as they are given.
- Try not to add your own interpretation or second guess what the interviewee meant.

E. Scoring

After you have conducted the interviews, follow the directions for scoring.

Community Readiness Interview Script

Introductory script (sample)

Hello, my name is _____. We are conducting interviews in our community to ask questions about the prevention and intervention of child maltreatment. I'm contacting key people and organizations in our community that represent a wide range of community-based organizations and community members. The purpose of this interview is to learn how ready our community is to address prevention and intervention efforts in child maltreatment.

Each interview will last about 30 to 60 minutes (60 to 90 minutes for groups), is voluntary, and individual names will not be associated with interviews. These questions will cover six dimensions, which include: existing community efforts, community knowledge about prevention, leadership, community climate, knowledge about the problem, and resources for prevention efforts.

You were identified as a key source of information due to your role/experience as _____.

Is this a good time to talk? Ok, well, let's get started. [If needed, schedule another time to talk.]

[Proceed to conduct interview, documenting responses. Following the interview proceed to next paragraph of narrative.]

Thank you for taking the time to do this interview. Your information will be used to help our community build a prevention plan to address and child maltreatment. It will be based on the information from this and other interviews, and an assessment of our community strengths and needs. Your time and your commitment to our community is greatly appreciated.

Community Readiness Assessment Interview Questions

Dimension A: Existing community efforts

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, how much of a concern is the issue in our community? (With 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "a great concern"). Please explain your rating.

2. What prevention/intervention programs or services are available in our community that address the issue?

3. How long have these programs or services been available?

4. What prevention programs or services are being planned for our community that address the issue?

5. What other treatment efforts or services are available in our community?

6. How long have these services been available?

7. What efforts or services are being planned for our community that address this issue?

8. Generally, do people in the community use these services? Are there plans to expand additional services or efforts? Please explain.

9. What policies related to the issue are in place in the community?

10. Can you describe efforts to involve the community, including youth and elders, in the planning of prevention programs or services to address this issue?

Dimension B: Community knowledge about prevention

1. Based on your knowledge, what does the community know about efforts being made to address the child maltreatment? Include information such as the name of programs, the services provided, how to access services, who they serve (such as youth, adults, males, females), and the focus of the treatment.

2. On a scale from 1 to 10, how aware is the general community of these prevention and treatment efforts? (With 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "a great deal"). Please explain your rating.

3. What are the strengths of the available prevention programs and treatment services?

4. What are the limitations of the available prevention programs and treatment services?

Dimension C: Leadership

1. On a scale from 1 to 10, how concerned are our elected leaders with providing child welfare prevention/intervention programs for community members? (With 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "a great concern"). Please explain your rating.

2. On a scale from 1 to 10, how concerned are our informal or influential leaders with providing prevention and intervention services for community members? (With 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "a great concern"). Please explain your rating.

3. How are these leaders (elected or informal) involved in efforts regarding child maltreatment in our community? In other words, what are they doing?

4. Would the leadership (elected or informal) support additional efforts to address and plan for the prevention and intervention of child maltreatment in our community? Please explain.

Dimension D: Community climate

1. How would you describe our community?

2. What are the community's feelings about the prevention of child maltreatment?

3. How does the community support the prevention and intervention efforts?

4. What are the primary obstacles to obtaining or adding more prevention or intervention programs or services in our community?

Dimension E: Knowledge about the problem

1. How knowledgeable are community members about the issue of child maltreatment? Please explain.

2. In our community, what types of information are available about the prevention of child maltreatment?

3. Is local data on child maltreatment and prevention programs available in our community? If so, from where?

Dimension F: Resources for prevention efforts

1. Who would a person turn to first for help if he or she needed parenting support?

2. What are the community's feelings about getting involved in child maltreatment efforts (e.g., talking to a person thinking about suicide, volunteering time, financial donations, providing space)?

3. Please describe any prevention plans or grants to address the issue of child maltreatment in our community.

4. Do you know if any of these prevention activities or grants are being evaluated?

5. These are all of the questions we have for you today do you have anything else to add?

Scoring Community Readiness interviews

Scoring is an easy step-by-step process that gives you the readiness stages for each of the six dimensions. The following pages provide the process for scoring. Ideally, the Center readiness and evaluability onsite group (onsite team) should participate in the scoring process in order to ensure valid results on this type of qualitative data. Here are step-by-step instructions:

1. Working independently, the onsite team scorers should read through each interview in its entirety before scoring any of the dimensions, in order to get a general feeling and impression from the interview. Although questions are arranged in the interview to pertain to specific dimensions, other interview sections may have some responses that will help provide richer information and insights that may be helpful in scoring other dimensions.

2. Again, working independently, the onsite team scorers should read the anchored rating scale for the dimension being scored. Always start with the first anchored rating statement. Go through each dimension separately and highlight or underline statements that refer to the anchored rating statements. If the community exceeds the first statement, proceed to the next statement. In order to receive a score at a certain stage, all previous levels must have been met up to and including the statement which the scorer believes best reflects what is stated in the interview. In other words, a community cannot be at stage 7 and not have achieved what is reflected in the statements for stages 1 through 6.

3. On the scoring sheet, the onsite team scorer puts his or her independent scores in the table labeled INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP SCORES using the scores for each dimension of each of the interviews. The table provides spaces for the eight key respondent interviews or consensus group interviews. Similarly, group consensus feedback is scored independently by the Center readiness and evaluability onsite team members to obtain the level of community readiness on each dimension.

4. The onsite team may follow up with the Tribal community participants of the group to clarify or resolve informational gaps which arise.

5. When the independent scoring is complete, the onsite team then meets to discuss the scores. The goal is to reach consensus on the scores by discussing items or statements that might have been missed by one scorer, communications indicating variance in readiness and which may affect the combined or final score assigned. Remember: Different people can have slightly different impressions, and it is important to seek explanation for the decisions made. Once

consensus is reached, fill in the table labeled COMBINED SCORES on one of the scoring sheets. Add across each row to yield a total for each dimension.

6. To find the CALCULATED SCORES for each dimension, take the total for that dimension and divide it by the number of interviews. For example: If onsite team has the following combined scores for their interviews:

Interviews	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	Total
Dimension A	3.5	5.0	4.25	4.75	5.5	3.75	2.75	3.00	32.50

TOTAL Dimension A: 32.50 ÷ # of interviews (8) = 4.06

Repeat for all dimensions, and then total the scores. To find the OVERALL STAGE OF READINESS, take the total of all calculated scores and divide by the number of dimensions (6).

- Example of final scores for each dimension:
  Dimension A: 4.06

  Dimension B: 5.67

  Dimension C: 2.54

  Dimension D: 3.29

  Dimension E: 6.43

  Dimension F: 4.07

  26.06 ÷ # of dimensions (6) = 4.34 Overall Stage of Readiness

In the example above, the average 4.34 represents the fourth stage of readiness (preplanning).

The scores correspond with the numbered stages and are "rounded down" rather than up, so a score between a 1.0 and a 1.99 would be the first stage, a score of 2.0 to 2.99 would be the second and so forth.

- Finally, under comments, write down any impressions about the community, any unique outcomes, and any qualifying statements that may relate to the score of your community.
- Strategies are developed per dimension based on their individual readiness scores.

Community Readiness Assessment Scoring Sheet

Scorer: _____ Date: _____

INDIVIDUAL or GROUP SCORES: Record each scorer's independent results for each interview for each dimension. The table provides spaces for up to eight interviews. Group consensus interviews, if added to individual scoring interviews, are repeated for as many participants as were in the group.

Interviews	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
Dimension A								
Dimension B								
Dimension C								
Dimension D								
Dimension E								
Dimension F								

COMBINED SCORES: For each interview, the onsite team scorers should discuss their individual scores and then agree on a single score. This is the COMBINED SCORE. Record it below and repeat for each interview in each dimension. Then, add across each row and find the total for each dimension. Use the total to find the calculated score below.

Interviews	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	Total
Dimension A									
Dimension B									
Dimension C									
Dimension D									
Dimension E									
Dimension F									

CALCULATED SCORES: Use the combined score TOTAL in the table above and divide by the number of interviews conducted. Add the calculated scores together and enter it under total.

						Stage Score
TOTAL Dimension A	____	÷	# of interviews	____	=	____
TOTAL Dimension B	____	÷	# of interviews	____	=	____
TOTAL Dimension C	____	÷	# of interviews	____	=	____
TOTAL Dimension D	____	÷	# of interviews	____	=	____
TOTAL Dimension E	____	÷	# of interviews	____	=	____
TOTAL Dimension F	____	÷	# of interviews	____	=	____

Score	Stage of Readiness
1	No Awareness
2	Denial/Resistance
3	Vague Awareness
4	Preplanning
5	Preparation
6	Initiation
7	Stabilization
8	Confirmation/Expansion
9	High Level of Community Ownership

COMMENTS, IMPRESSIONS, and QUALIFYING STATEMENTS about the community:

Anchored rating scales for scoring each dimension

You may assign scores in intervals of .25 to accurately reflect a score on which consensus can be attained. The hyphens ("-") under each of the levels of readiness (i.e., 1 through 9) for each dimension indicates intervals of .25 (e.g., 1.00, 1.25, 1.50, 1.75, 2.00).

Dimension A. Existing community efforts

1 No awareness of the need for efforts to address the issue.

-
-
-

2 No efforts addressing the issue.

-
-
-

3 A few individuals recognize the need to initiate some type of effort, but there is no immediate motivation to do anything

-
-
-

4 Some community members have met and have begun a discussion of developing community efforts.

-
-
-

5 Efforts (programs or activities) are being planned.

-
-
-

6 Efforts (programs or activities) have been implemented.

-
-
-

7 Efforts (programs or activities) have been running for at least 4 years or more.

-
-
-

8 Several different programs, activities, and policies are in place, covering different age groups and reaching a wide range of people. New efforts are being developed based on evaluation data.

-
-
-

9 Evaluation plans are routinely used to test effectiveness of many different efforts, and the results are being used to make changes and improvement

-
-
-

Dimension B: Community knowledge of the efforts

1 Community has no knowledge of the need for efforts addressing the issue.
-
-
-

2 Community has no knowledge about efforts addressing the issue.
-
-
-

3 A few members of the community have heard about the efforts, but the extent of their knowledge is limited.
-
-
-

4 Some members of the community know about local efforts.
-
-
-

5 Members of the community have basic knowledge about local efforts (e.g., their purpose).
-
-
-

6 An increasing number of community members have knowledge of local efforts and are trying to increase the knowledge of the general community about these efforts.
-
-
-

7 There is evidence that the community has specific knowledge of local efforts including contact persons, training of staff, clients involved, etc.
-
-
-

8 There is considerable community knowledge about different community efforts, as well as the level of program effectiveness.
-
-
-

9 Community has knowledge of program evaluation data on how well the different local efforts are working and their benefits and limitations.
-
-
-

Dimension C: Leadership (includes appointed leaders and influential community members)

1 Leadership has no recognition of the issue.
-
-
-

2 Leadership believes that the issue is not a concern in their community.
-
-
-

3 Leaders recognize the need to do something regarding the issue.
-
-
-

4 Leaders are trying to get something started.
-
-
-

5 Leaders are part of a committee or group that address the issue.
-
-
-

6 Leaders are active and supportive of the implementation of efforts.
-
-
-

7 Leaders are supportive of continuing basic efforts and are considering resources available for self-sufficiency.
-
-
-

8 Leaders are supportive of expanding and improving efforts through active participation in the expansion or improvement.
-
-
-

9 Leaders are continually reviewing evaluation results of the efforts and are modifying support accordingly.
-
-
-

Dimension D: Community Climate

1 The prevailing attitude that the issue is not considered, is unnoticed, or overlooked within the community, "It's just not our concern."

-
-
-

2 The prevailing attitude is, "There's nothing we can do," or "Only those people do that" or "Only those people have that."

-
-
-

3 Community climate is neutral, uninterested, or believes that the issue does not affect the community as a whole.

-
-
-

4 The attitude in the community is now beginning to reflect interest in the issue, "We have to do something, be we don't know what to do."

-
-
-

5 The attitude in the community is, "We are concerned about this," and community members are beginning to reflect modest support for efforts.

-
-
-

6 The attitude in the community is, "This is our responsibility," and is now beginning to reflect modest involvement in efforts.

-
-
-

7 The majority of the community generally supports programs, activities, or policies, "We have taken responsibility."

-
-
-

8 Some community members or groups may challenge specific programs, but the community in general is strongly supportive of the need for efforts. Participation level is high, "We need to keep up on this issue and make sure what we are doing is effective."

-
-
-

9 All major segments of the community are highly supportive, and community members are actively involved in evaluating and improving efforts and demand accountability.

-
-
-

Dimension E: Community knowledge about the issue

1 The issue is not viewed as an issue that we need to know about.
-
-
-

2 No knowledge about the issue.
-
-
-

3 A few in the community have basic knowledge of the issue and recognize that some people here may be affected by the issue.
-
-
-

4 Some community members have basic knowledge and recognize that the issue occurs locally but information and/or access to information is lacking.
-
-
-

5 Some community members have basic knowledge of the issue, including signs and symptoms. General information on the issue is available.
-
-
-

6 A majority of community members have basic knowledge of the issue and prevention of the issue, including the signs, symptoms and behaviors. There are local data available.
-
-
-

7 Community members have knowledge of, and access to, detailed information about local prevalence.
-
-
-

8 Community members have knowledge about prevalence, causes, risk factors and related health concerns.
-
-
-

9 Community members have detailed information about the issue and prevention/intervention with the issue and related concerns, as well as information about the effectiveness of local programs.
-
-
-

Dimension F: Resources related to the issue (people, money, time, space)

1 There is no awareness of the need for resources to deal with the issue.
-
-
-

2 There are no resources available for dealing with the issue.
-
-
-

3 The community is not sure what it would take, or where the resources would come from, to initiate the efforts.
-
-
-

4 The community has individuals, organizations, and/or space available that could be used as resources.
-
-
-

5 Some members of the community are looking into the available resources.
-
-
-

6 Resources have been obtained and/or allocated for the issue.
-
-
-

7 A considerable part of ongoing efforts are from local sources that are expected to provide continuous support.
-
-
-

8 Diversified resources and funds are secured and efforts are expected to be ongoing. There is additional support for further efforts.
-
-
-

9 There is continuous and secure support for programs and activities, evaluation is routinely expected and completed, and there are substantial resources for trying new efforts.
-
-
-

Record of community strengths, conditions or concerns, and resources

Community Name: _____Date of Workshop: _____
Staff Name(s): _____
Overall Readiness Score and Stage: _____

Strengths	Conditions/Concerns	Resources

-EXAMPLE-

Record of community strengths, conditions or concerns, and resources

Community Name: Anywhere, USA Date of Workshop: 8/1/2014
Staff Name(s):
Overall Readiness Score and Stage: 4, Preplanning

Strengths	Conditions or Concerns	Resources
Community pride Caring for one another Strong family units; Religious/spiritual support Education Strong work ethic Cultural heritage Low crime/safe community Honesty (painfully so); Low cost of living Lake resources Recreation (baseball, track, golf); Tribal support;	Negative attitude Stigma Powerful and inaccurate gossip; School involvement is low Tough to challenge Lack of program buy-in from general community Low socioeconomic status Lack of youth input; Large minority population that is ignored by the state Few programs available locally No confidentiality Everyone knows everyone;	School Church Community and civic groups Spiritual leaders; Good healthcare and clinic Volunteers Lake School activities and clubs Family Neighbors Finances Health fairs; Sports opportunities Strong political connections; Local supportive newspaper; Local radio station;

Important points about using the model

Keep in mind that dimension scores provide the essence of the community diagnostic, which is an important tool for strategizing. If your Community Readiness Assessment scores reveal that readiness in one dimension is much lower than readiness in others, you will need to focus your efforts on improving readiness in that dimension. For instance, if the community seems to have resources to support efforts but lacks committed leadership to harness those resources, strategies might include one-on-one contacts with key leaders to obtain their support.

Remember: "Best practices" are only best for your community if they are congruent with your stage of readiness and are culturally appropriate for your community.

As another example, if a community has a moderate level of existing efforts but very little community knowledge of those efforts, one strategy may be to increase public awareness of those efforts through personal contacts and carefully chosen media consistent with the readiness stage. The facilitator should start with the first dimension and read the questions under that dimension. The facilitator should then ask the group to refer to the anchored rating scale for that dimension and using their responses to the questions asked, look at the first statement and see if they feel they can confidently say that their community meets and goes beyond the first statement.

Remember, it is the dimension scores which provide the community diagnostic to serve as the "guide"—showing you where efforts need to be expended before attempting advancement to strategies for the next stage.

The facilitator should then lead the group through the statements until one is reached that even just one member cannot agree that the community has attained that level. Everyone's input is important. Don't try and talk someone out of their opinion—they may represent a different constituency than other group members. A score between the previous statement where there was consensus and the one where consensus cannot be attained should be assigned for that dimension.

Validity and reliability of the Community Readiness Model Assessment tool

The Community Readiness Model Assessment tool provides an assessment of the nature and extent of knowledge and support within a community to address an issue at a given point in time. Both "the community" and "the issue" change from application to application, so standard techniques for establishing validity are not easily followed. The ***Center for Native Child and Family Resilience*** (the Center) will support clarity and empower Tribal Communities by performing this brief community readiness assessment protocol. In establishing the validity of a measure, it is customary to find another measure that has similar intent that is well documented and accepted and see if, with the same group of people, results on the new measure agree with results on the more established measure. It is difficult to apply this methodology to the Community Readiness Assessment tool, since each application is unique

and the constructs or ideas that the tool is measuring have not been addressed by other measures. There are, however, still ways validity can be established.

Following the protocol described in the scoring section helps increase the Community Readiness Assessment tool's validity and utility. This process generally ensures:

- The group consensus feedback is scored independently by the Center readiness and evaluability onsite team members to obtain the level of community readiness on each dimension.
- The Center readiness and evaluability onsite (onsite team) team may follow up with the tribal community participants of the group to clarify or resolve informational gaps which arise. selected to facilitate in refining this consensus-based process.
- Following this community consensus building readiness appraisal scoring, the onsite team will meet to find consensus in an alternative ranking of the readiness assessment based upon the experience of the interview process.
- Having completed this process, a balance will be sought to clarify variances in the consensus-based community participants or stakeholders and the experiences of the onsite evaluation team.

Defining the Brief Assessment Process

Sometimes there is insufficient time or resources for a full assessment, but it is critical to develop an understanding of where your "community" is on each dimension before making plans for efforts.

If available, a group of people representative of the community, such as a coalition, the assessment can be done in the group, with discussion targeted toward building consensus for scoring for each dimension.

For such an assessment, one person of the onsite evaluation team should serve as facilitator, with the other of the team listening in to observe the process and feedback. Each participant should have a copy of the anchored rating scales for each dimension.

Validity and reliability of the Community Readiness Model Assessment tool

Establishing Construct Validity

The theory of the Community Readiness Model is a "broad scale theory." A broad scale theory deals with a large number of different phenomena, such as facts or opinions, and a very large number of possible relationships among those phenomena. Although it is not possible to have a single test to establish construct validity for a broad scale theory, it is possible to test hypotheses that derive from the theory. If the hypotheses prove to be accurate, then the underlying theory and the instrument used to assess the theory are likely to be valid (Oetting & Edwards). This approach has been taken over the course of development of the Community Readiness Model and construct validity for the model has been demonstrated. An explication of the hypotheses tested and results are presented in the Oetting & Edwards article.

Acceptance of the Model

The Community Readiness Model Assessment tool provides an assessment of the nature and extent of knowledge and support within a community to address an issue at a given point in time. Both "the community" and "the issue" change from application to application, so standard techniques for

establishing validity are not easily followed. In establishing validity of a measure, it is customary to find another measure that has similar intent that is well documented and accepted and see if, with the same group of people, results on the new measure agree with results on the more established measure. It is difficult to apply this methodology to the Community Readiness Assessment tool since each application is unique and the constructs or ideas that the tool is measuring have not been addressed by other measures. There are, however, still ways validity can be established.

As with measures of validity, the Community Readiness Assessment tool does not lend itself well to traditional measures of reliability. For many types of measures, the best evidence for reliability may be test-retest reliability. That type of methodology assumes that whatever is being measured doesn't change and if the instrument is reliable, it will obtain very similar results from the same respondent at two points in time. Readiness levels are rarely static, although they may remain at approximately the same level for very low stages and very high stages for some time. Once an issue is recognized as a problem in a community (stage 3, vague awareness or stage 4, preplanning), there is almost always some movement, often resulting in some efforts getting underway (stage 6, initiation) and likely becoming part of an ongoing program (stage 7, stabilization) or beyond. This movement from stage to stage can take place in a relatively short period of time depending on circumstances in the community and movement can occur at different rates on the different dimensions. For this reason, calculating a test/retest reliability is inappropriate.

Consistent Patterns

We have, however, taken a careful look at changes in community readiness over time, and there are consistent patterns that reflect on reliability. In one of those studies, for example, communities that were assessed as being low in readiness to deal with methamphetamine abuse were also assessed as being low in readiness over the next 3 years. In contrast, communities that were above stage 4, preplanning, were likely to change in readiness. For this pattern to occur, the measures of readiness had to be reasonably consistent over time.

An aspect of reliability that is highly important in determining how useful this model can be is inter-rater reliability. There are two ways of looking at this type of reliability for the Community Readiness Model—consistency among respondents and inter-rater reliability in scoring.

Consistency Among Respondents

One aspect of inter-rater reliability is the level of consistency among the respondents who are interviewed about readiness in their community. We have calculated consistency across respondents, and it is generally very high. We improve accuracy by restricting respondents to persons who have been in the community for a year or more, which generally results in a valid interview—an interview that accurately reflects what is actually happening in the community.

At the same time, we do not expect or want to obtain exactly the same information from each respondent—that is why we select respondents with different community roles and community connections. Each respondent is expected to have a unique perspective and their responses will reflect that perspective. The information that is collected through the interviews is never "right" or "wrong," it simply reflects the understanding of the respondent about what is going on in the community. There are, of course, occasions when respondents do not agree; when they have radically different views of what is going on in their community. If one respondent gives responses vastly different from the others

in the same community, we add further interviews to determine what is actually occurring in that community. The very high level of agreement among respondents is, therefore, enhanced because of these methods that we use to assure that we are getting an accurate picture of the community.

Inter-Rater Reliability in Scoring

The consensus of interviews with community respondents are scored independently by the scorers to obtain the level of community readiness on each dimension. We have tested inter-rater reliability on over 120 interviews by checking the agreement between scores given for each interview by the raters. The scorers, working independently, gave the exact same score when rating dimensions on an interview 92% of the time. This is an exceptionally high level of agreement and speaks to the effectiveness of the anchored rating scales in guiding appropriate assignment of scores.

It is part of the scoring protocol that after scoring independently, scorers meet to discuss their scores on each interview and agree on a final consensus score. We interviewed the scorers following this process and for nearly all of the 8% of the time they disagreed, it was because one scorer overlooked a statement in the interview that would have indicated a higher or lower level of readiness and that person subsequently altered their original score accordingly.

The inter-rater reliability is, in a sense, also evidence for validity of the measure in that it reflects that each of the two persons reading the transcript of the same interview, were able to extract information leading them to conclude that the community was at the same level of readiness. If the assessment scales were not well grounded in the theory, we would expect to see much more individual interpretation and much less agreement.

Appendix E: Guided Story Telling Framework Tool

Center for
Native Child
and Family Resilience

Native Solutions with Native Voices
Guided Storytelling Framework
August 31, 2018

Visit preparation for listeners:

Before arriving on site, do your homework. Closely review the separate cultural awareness references to ensure familiarity with the local community and how to respectfully conduct yourself while working with community members. These documents include:

- *A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities,* Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Tribal Workgroup, September 2013
- A historical timeline of Federal Indian Policies and their impacts on tribal communities, developed by Mathematica
- Foundational literature identified by workgroup members
- SAMHSA's Tribal Training and Technical Assistance training slides for American Indian/Alaska Native Grants and Programs staff outlining Do's and Don'ts in Indian Country
- Any publications or reports from the Tribal communities (if available) that illustrate important cultural protocols which may guide engagement with the community
- The Cultural Matrix Assessment Tool

Basic background information [Fill this out before you go onsite]	
Community: *[Note whether multiple distinct communities reside in the same area. "Confederated" means more than one group is part of the community.]*	
Language:	
Local terms for research, evaluation:	

1

Listeners:	
Visit dates:	
Program/intervention: *[Describe what you know about the program or intervention based on application materials and pre-visit calls and preparation.]*	
Local context: *[This section could include current political and socioeconomic landscape, current litigation in federal courts, community-specific history, and upcoming cultural events or ceremonies.]*	

Instructions for listeners (Review these instructions prior to each visit):

- **Listening.** Be a good listener. This means listen first, talk second, and do not interrupt. Depending on the region, you may need to wait longer than you're used to, in order to be sure the other person is finished speaking. Become familiar with local communication styles and modify yours as needed. For example, you might notice that there are longer pauses between sentences. As mentioned in your reference materials, some Tribal communities regard loud and fast speech as disrespectful.

- **Note-taking.** Your main job is to listen and learn from the community. You may politely ask if you can record the conversation so that you can focus on the conversation without having to take notes. If your request is denied, you may ask if you can take written notes. Be aware of the kind of notes you're taking. Laptops may present a physical barrier to communication. Rapid typing sounds from a laptop may be distracting or worrisome; consider using pen and paper. If you need to use a laptop, sit so everyone can see your screen. Do not use a phone for taking notes; you may appear to be ignoring the speaker.

- **Opening.** Before asking any questions, take time upon arrival to have a short meet and greet. Start by offering a gift. Remember that because of the damaging history of research in Tribal communities, program staff might feel wary or nervous at your presence.

    - Tell the staff present who you are, where you're from, and perhaps something about yourself or family if it comes up naturally in conversation. If you're offered food or beverage politely accept it. If multiple people are eating, try to wait until

elders are served before serving yourself. Be open and humble about your presence in their community and state that the purpose of your visit is to listen to their story. People may wonder about your racial/ethnic background, so bring it up during your introduction to avoid potentially awkward conversations later. (For example, if applicable, you can simply add "I'm non-Native myself, my grandparents were ___ immigrants from ____.") **DO NOT** claim or share a vague Native identity or family rumor of Native identity if you are not confident of this connection and/or do not otherwise claim it in your personal life. Such action will limit your credibility and may likely annoy Tribal members.

- Remind them that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers. The goal is to put both you and the community members at ease and pave the way for good relations. Ensure you understand local cultural protocols for sharing knowledge. The oral tradition has facilitated intergenerational knowledge and wisdom that have survived for millennia. Communities take great pride in their history but are not static in history, as they continue to decolonize and strive to retain and reclaim their cultural traditions.

- While you are on site, take the time to recognize the unique strengths of that particular community; it will pave the way for good relations in the future. In your interactions with the community, focus on the positive and strengths rather than the negative or criticisms.

- **Transparency.** Let the staff know if you are unfamiliar with their culture. This may not be necessary in every situation, but if you feel uncomfortable or uncertain about how to act, you might say something like, "I'm new to working with Tribal communities. I want to be respectful, so please let me know if any of my actions seem inappropriate." Take time to answer any questions they have and address any concerns.

- **Timing.** Be aware of differing notions of time. Be open to the premise that things happen when they are supposed to happen, rather than at exact junctures in time. DON'T RUSH. You will have an agenda and a time frame to follow. However, time and being 'on time' are relative cultural concepts. Don't impose your will or cultural lens when it comes to time. When working in a Tribal community, budget time for late arrivals and prepare for extended time lines. Western society's approach to time is focused on certain points, intervals, or specific times. Some Native conceptions of time are circular or cyclical and are not points plotted on a line; rather, they are embedded in stories and culture passed down through generations.

- **Eye contact**. In some communities, direct eye contact may be considered rude and disrespectful. This is especially true with elders. Staff might look at their hands or may only look indirectly at your eyes. If you notice that program staff, parents, or children are not

making eye contact, this does not mean that they are not listening or paying attention. Rather, they are showing respect. Follow their lead and look in their direction, but not directly into their eyes. However, if a community member is looking down or clearly ignoring you, this is to show disagreement or displeasure. Again, careful observation is key to avoiding misunderstanding.

- **Physical contact**. Do not try to initiate a hug or embrace, even at the end of a meeting that feels to have gone particularly well. Likewise, some people may not wish to shake hands, so follow others lead when it comes to physical contact.

- **Be mindful of your own physical presence.** Differences in height, weight, stature, physical handicap, etc. all exert power dynamics in conversations. Be mindful of this when engaging with people, especially elders. For example, if you are 6'2'' and are speaking with a Tribal elder who is 5,' be mindful of that dynamic. Your physical appearance may be intimidating, so wait for the elder to approach you. Let the interviewee decide the "staging" of the conversation (e.g., let them choose where to sit first and ask them "is it ok if I sit here?").

- **Questioning.** You may ask staff a question and receive a long pause in response. Learn to be comfortable with long pauses or silence; this is sometimes difficult. Breaks in conversation or long pauses sometimes make us uncomfortable and can feel awkward. However, this is common in many Tribal communities. The person you are speaking with is likely formulating the best way to answer. Avoid sensitive questions regarding lifestyle or cultural practices. This refers to anything related to bodily comportment or how one behaves or carries oneself, including spirituality, hair, or dress. Do not be too forward or direct in how you engage program staff. It is best to be humble and polite; do not use commanding language or directives.
    - **Probing/clarifying.** Offer opportunities for clarifying information throughout the conversation. Try not to make people repeat information, but rather probe to understand the meaning.

- **Indirect communication**. Oral tradition remains an essential part of most Tribal communities, and storytelling is sometimes an indirect way of imparting information and life lessons. When asking questions in Tribal communities, it is important to be sensitive to this form of communication. Sometimes a seemingly mundane question could spark a long story or response; in these moments, be open to listening and do not interrupt. They will respond well to slower talk, more pausing, sharing information, and storytelling.

- **Vocabulary.** Use language that is culturally sensitive and easy to understand. Avoid jargon, acronyms, and language that might be standard operating procedure for your work but is too specific and unfamiliar to the community members. In the context of research, this might happen when explaining the nature of the study. Be aware of how you explain our work. Slow your pace and give them time to ask questions or voice concerns. Additionally, if

possible, avoid the word research when conversing with Native people. The term can be a painful reminder of a legacy of research that often caused harm to Tribal communities.

- **Topics to avoid.** Unless the topics are introduced by members of the community, do not bring up Tribal elections, blood quantum, enrollment rules, boarding schools, or per cap payments. These can be sensitive topics and should be avoided. Do not inquire about unrelated topics, such as what someone is wearing (clothing, jewelry, braids) or about a ceremony that is taking place that you were not invited to participate in. Show respect for the presence of cultural and spiritual processes.

How to use this discussion guide:

You should tailor the discussion guide to each person or group of people you speak with. You can start by asking the bolded questions. The bullets that follow are probes you may use to get more information—***you do not need to ask each one***.

Discussion guide
1. Please tell us about your community.
• Family or Community Wellness: What efforts does your community currently have available for community or family wellness or healing?
• Living in balance and harmony: I understand that different indigenous languages may have specific words or phrases for the concept of living in balance and harmony. Do you feel comfortable sharing how your community expresses this concept in services?
• Traditional parenting and kinship practices: How do people in the community teach of life, respect for gifts of life or how to be in the world? And who does that?
• Knowledge bearers: Who are the knowledge bearers? Who are the Tribal/cultural community leaders active in family or community wellness?
• Cultural history: How do you think about the community's resilience? I'm sure you're used to hearing about intergeneration trauma, but what does that mean in this community? What aspects of cultural practices remain a source of strength? What aspects of intergenerational trauma or this history still impact the health of individuals, families, and the community?
• Politics: What's the political climate around this program? Who are the Tribal community organizers or champions of wellness? Are they aligned with this program?
• Relationship with public human service agencies (e.g. state/local, health, social services, or child welfare): What is your relationship with state or local public human services agencies? In what ways do they help or hinder your program?

2. Can you tell us the story of your program? Can you tell us about how this program got started?
• Process: What process or vision did you follow which led to developing this model or program? How did you get there?
• Program history: What was the process for understanding the community and cultural ways that would benefit this program? Please tell me the story of how a shared vision brought the program to this point.   ○ How did you identify the need for this program, and what went into that? (Formal needs assessment, Tribal council decided, etc.)
• Partners/knowledge bearers: Who were the leaders or organizers of the program development? What type of guidance or vision led to their commitments to the program?
• Activities: What are the essential activities of your program? Where are the activities and functions of the program offered (in community, in office or in a traditional setting)?
• Staffing: How do you identify the skills needed to be a part of your program? Do you staff traditional healers, culture bearers, or elders as part of your program?   ○ Are any youth communities or groups involved in this program?
• Resources: How do you balance assessing and serving the needs of your children and families in ways that are reflective of your culture?

• Work with other agencies: What other partners are involved in this program (e.g. federal/state/local, health, social services or child welfare), and what does their involvement look like?
  ○ In what ways do they help or hinder your program?
  ○ How does this program interact with other programs that are running (if any)?

3. What are the most essential parts of your program that reflect your ways of knowing and caring for people?
• Decolonization and cultural revitalization: Is decolonization and language/cultural revitalization a part of your program or vision for the future?
• Native wellness and healing: What do you see influencing the most change in the children and families you see that are part of this program? When you think about your approach to prevention and/or healing, what/where/who do you look to better understand how it is working (information/data, observations, stories, etc.)?
• Trauma: How do you address historical and intergenerational trauma in your program?
• What is the shared vision of the people and participants involved in the program? Are the efforts guided by cultural values, or possibly the guidance of spiritual calling or the vision of leaders?
• How do you keep families engaged? What happens when people prematurely leave the program?

4. How do people get to you for wellness and healing? How do they find the program?
• Other services available: Where else can people go for help and healing?
• Demand for services: Please describe how community members access your program. Are there other people your program could serve, but haven't yet? What are the barriers to accessing services?
• Capacity: Are there limits around how many can participate?
• Eligibility criteria: Who do you serve? Are there eligibility requirements? (i.e., Tribal citizenship, age, where they live)
5. Tribal communities have practiced evaluation through their own cultural lens since time immemorial. Some of this became part of the foundation for Western models and others remained in Native communities. What is the history of evaluation in this community? Is that history good or bad? How has it impacted the community?
• What could have/should have been done differently?
• Has this history (good or bad) informed a code of conduct for conducting evaluation today?
• How do elders view data methods and evaluation from your cultural experience?
• How does your community prefer to collect information?
6. What kind of information tells you that the program is effective? How would you come to know if you're having a positive or desired impact?
• What would people say that would tell you if you were achieving the impact which you seek for the participants?
• What would the desired impact look like, and how would you know?

• Information sources: Where does that information come from?
  ○ Who records that information and how?
  ○ What would participants say?
  ○ What would elders and leaders say?

• What would community members experience as a result of the program?
• Does the state collect any information about the program?
• What information, if any, does the Tribe collect about this program?
7. Are there challenges that you've had to overcome with this program?
• Strengths: How did you overcome them?
• Learning: Where or in what areas are you still learning about how to best implement this program?

8. What's your vision for the future? What do you need to achieve that vision?
• Capacity: What are you needs for capacity building?   ○ If you could have any kind of additional support to help these families, what would it be?
• How does the program align with the current priorities/strategic vision of the Tribe/?
• Outcomes: What tangible efforts or behaviors are important at the individual, family, community or even Tribal levels?   ○ Where do you hope to make the biggest impact?
9. What would you like to learn from an evaluation? What is your vision for an evaluation?
• What approach to evaluation is in keeping with your values as a community?
• What would an evaluation of this program look like?
• Is there a local or regional Institutional Review Board (or IRB)?   ○ Does the Tribal council or other governing body review applications?
10. You've shared a lot about your community and the story of this program. In thinking about the future of your community and this program's place in it, how would you tell the story of its future in the community? Where do you envision your program heading?

Closing instructions:

- [You are a guest at their program, and they volunteered their time and assistance. Take time to thank them for sharing their story.] I am honored that you have shared the strengths of this heartfelt work. As we have talked of the model and program you are growing, your vision for community wellness is evident. What do you hope will come of this work we have begun together?

- I am impressed by the richness of the model and ways of implementing it. This discussion is not an end but a beginning for our shared work together. I would like to keep this conversation going whether this program is selected for funding or not. Our continuing work might focus on producing a short readiness and evaluability document that could be molded into a proposal or concept document for funding agencies. Let's continue that conversation in the coming weeks. [Visitor will share next steps and remind them of how this information will be used, and when decisions will be made regarding working with the Center.]

- Make a short-term plan for follow-up and encourage the development of the model.

Appendix F: Pathway to Change

Capacity Building
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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

FIRST TALK: FOUNDATIONS

What We Build

PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION: Develop a short and memorable statement that captures the long-term desired condition you wish to see as a result of your project. This statement is your project's Vision of Success and you will refer back to it as you move forward on the Pathway to Change.

Examples of a Vision of Success:

> *"Children grow up in our community in safe, healthy, and culturally-grounded families."*
>
> *"Families in our community experience social, emotional, cultural, and economic well-being."*

QUESTION TO CONSIDER:

Remember, you are envisioning a desired future that will come about through your project. To develop your Vision of Success, asking questions such as the following may be helpful:

- What essential transformation (in children, families, community, child welfare program, etc.) would you like to see come about as a result of your project?
- What would your project like to leave behind as its legacy?
- What would you like your community to say in that future about what your project accomplished?
- What will be different in your community (or child welfare program) as a result of successfully completing your project?

Describe your long-term Vision of Success:

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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

Who We Impact

PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION: Identify the people, groups, and stakeholders that will be impacted by the change brought about by achieving the Vision of Success.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Who is the direct target of this change (individuals, groups, systems)?
- Who will be involved in making the change happen?
- Who else will be impacted by the change?

List the people, groups, and systems impacted by the change:

People, Groups, Systems	How They Are Impacted

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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

FIRST TALK: FOUNDATIONS

What We Know

PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION: Compile background and contextual information that is relevant to achieving the Vision of Success and completing the desired project.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What conditions currently exist in our community, with our families, or in our program?
- How does our child welfare program currently operate?
- What kinds of things are happening in our program/community that could support or detract from our project?
- What information or data do we have about the issues involved? What do we think may be contributing to these issues?

List of What We Know:

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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

FIRST TALK: FOUNDATIONS

What We Bring

PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION: Identify the resources, strengths, and challenges that the program, tribal community, and children and families bring to the desired project and which will be utilized in achieving the Vision of Success.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What formal and informal resources are available in our program? Our community?
- What do we see as the major strengths and resources of the program, the community, and children and families?
- What do we see as the major challenges and risk factors facing children and families in our community?

List the resources, strengths, and challenges that we bring to our desired project:

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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

FIRST TALK: FOUNDATIONS

What We Change

PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION: Identify specifics of what will be different than it is currently once the Vision of Success is achieved.

It may be helpful to think about what needs to happen or exist to move from the conditions in the What We Bring section to the conditions that will exist when the Vision of Success is achieved.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What needs to be put in place or revamped to reach our Vision of Success (These could be changes in practice or staffing, new services, support from community, etc.)
- What doesn't exist now, but will need to in the future, to achieve the Vision of Success?
- What needs to be happening in order to go from where we are now to the Vision of Success?
- What are our assumptions about why these changes need to happen and how they lead to the Vision of Success? What resources will we need to access?

List of changes that will need to occur to achieve the Vision of Success:

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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

FIRST TALK: FOUNDATIONS

What We Do

PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION: List some of the activities that will lead to the changes identified in the previous section, What We Change.

During the work planning phase of your project, ideas from this section may be developed in greater detail and included in the project work plan.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What practical activities will help us make our changes?
- What tasks need to be a part of each activity?
- Who needs to be involved in each activity?
- What will result from each activity?

Change	Activity(ies)

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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

Change	Activity(ies)

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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

How We Know (Evaluation & CQI)

PURPOSE OF THIS SECTION: Help you begin to think about how the evaluation and CQI concepts of *outputs* and *milestones* are connected to the activities in a work plan.

In this section we'll look at some of the activities listed in the section "What We Do" (and related to a change identified in the section "What We Change"), and identify outputs and milestones for those activities.

> Milestone = An action or event marking a significant point in progress or development; a sign of progress.
> Output = A direct and measurable product of a program activity.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What will indicate that we have achieved a particular activity or step within an activity?
- What are the milestones of a particular activity?
- How would we monitor our work to show we've met a milestone?
- What types of outputs would we expect from each activity?
- What data do we currently collect on activities and what new data might need to be collected?

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Pathway to Change: Your Road Map

Activity	**Milestones** (signs of progress)	Output(s) of the activity	How will we know activity has been completed?

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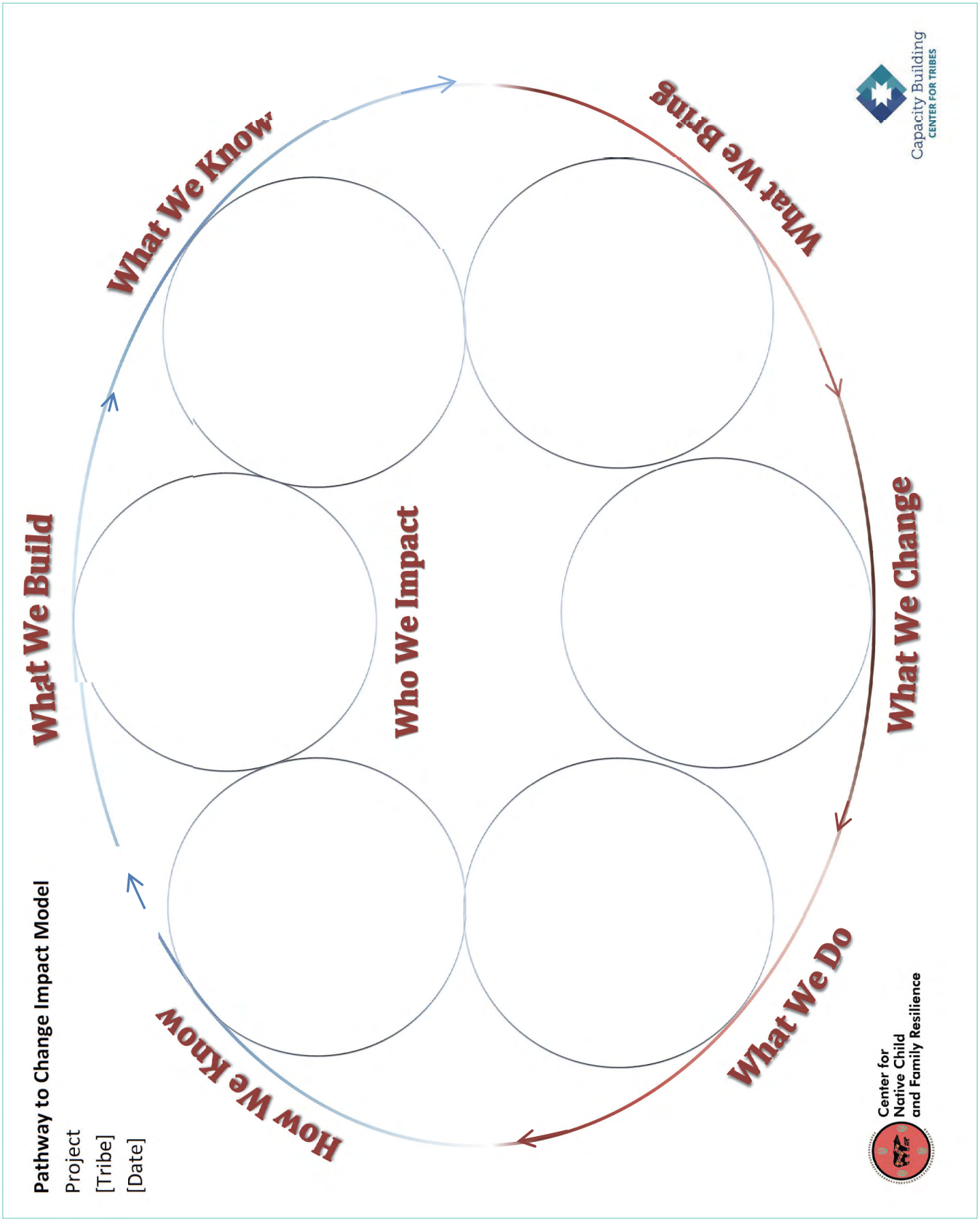
Pathway to Change Impact Model
Project
[Tribe]
[Date]
What We Know
What We Bring
What We Change
What We Do
How We Know
What We Build
Who We Impact
Capacity Building
CENTER FOR TRIBES
Center for
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and Family Resilience

Insert project or tribal logo here

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

Children's Bureau

[PROJECT NAME]

SECTION 1: PROJECT WORKPLAN

Proposed Project Summary

[Use text from the *Program Summary* section of the **Readiness and Evaluability Assessment** report.]

[TRIBAL ORGANIZATION]'s Project Site Team

[Enter the brief narrative in this area.]

[TRIBAL ORGANIZATION]'S PROJECT SITE TEAM		
NAME	**ROLE/TITLE**	**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**
		•
		•
		•
		•

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience Team

[Enter the brief narrative in this area.]

CENTER FOR NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY RESILIENCE TEAM		
NAME	**ROLE/TITLE**	**KEY RESPONSIBILITIES**
		•
		•
		•

Workplan Focus Area: Planning for Implementation

GOAL #1:			
DESIRED OUTCOMES			
Short-term: Long-term:			
Objective 1.1:			
ACTIVITIES	**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMELINE**	**EXPECTED OUTPUT (MILESTONE)**
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			
Objective 1.2:			
ACTIVITIES	**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMELINE**	**EXPECTED OUTPUT (MILESTONE)**
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			

Objective 1.3:			
ACTIVITIES	**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMELINE**	**EXPECTED OUTPUT (MILESTONE)**
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			

Workplan Focus Area: Intervention Implementation

GOAL #2:			
DESIRED OUTCOMES			
Short-term: Long-term:			
Objective 2.1:			
ACTIVITIES	**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMELINE**	**EXPECTED OUTPUT (MILESTONE)**
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			
Objective 2.2:			
ACTIVITIES	**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMELINE**	**EXPECTED OUTPUT (MILESTONE)**
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			

Objective 2.3:			
ACTIVITIES	**PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE**	**TIMELINE**	**EXPECTED OUTPUT (MILESTONE)**
1)			
2)			
3)			
4)			

Project Budget

[Insert the budget that was approved by the CNCFR to support this project here]

Budget		
Category	**Description/Justification**	**Amount**

Parking Lot

PARKING LOT			
Identified Issue (What?)	**Needed Action**	**Person Responsible (Who?)**	**Due Date (By When?)**

Schedule of Deliverables

[Enter the schedule of deliverables in this area.]

Schedule of Deliverables		
Item	**Description**	**Due Date**

SECTION 2: ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Legacy Plan

ATTACHMENT B: Community Driven Evaluation Plan

Appendix H: Legacy Planning Tool

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

Legacy Planning Tool

A program's legacy refers to how it continues to operate in a community as the way things are done, the ability of the program to continue to serve the community and sustain it over time. The legacy of a program and the ability to sustain all or part of the program might look different depending on where the program is in the planning process and its incorporation in the larger community.

The Legacy Planning Tool serves as a discussion guide for Center leads. It helps gather the information required for planning for sustainability and to brainstorm ways to address the key elements of sustainability. It provides Center leads with prompts to help sites envision a legacy for their program and figure out how the program can continue to help increase Tribal well-being. None of the prompts are mandatory and not every prompt will apply to every site. Center leads should work with each program and use the prompts they feel will help create the desired legacy of cultural resilience, family strengthening, child protection, community resilience, and/or risk reduction they want for their program.

The tool is divided into two parts ("Planning the Legacy" and "Creating the Legacy"). Ideally, "Planning the Legacy" should be used early in the life cycle of a program, helping the site think through their specific vision and mission for the program. "Creating the Legacy" should ideally be used later in the life cycle of a program to more concretely assess where the program is in their outlined vision, where they hope to be and what they need to do to get there. In this way, the program can build and sustain a program, guided by culture, that becomes a foundational part of the community.

Planning the Legacy

This part includes prompts designed to help the program think about the parts they want to sustain, why they are important to sustain and how it might happen. Center leads can use the

prompts contained in this part with the program early in the process so they can start thinking about sustainability in order to create a mission and vision to ground and guide the program as it moves forward.

- How does/will this program function in the community? What role does/will it play?
- How is culture integrated into the program?
- What goals do we want to achieve? Where does the program want to go in the future?
- What do we want to develop or increase as a result of the program?
  - ☐ Workforce: practitioner(s) and/or ICWA program staff expertise
  - ☐ Resources: foster homes, coalitions, curricula, learning platforms, modules, documentation, handouts, print/online resources
  - ☐ Buy-in: Tribal Council, Community, other
  - ☐ Partnerships
  - ☐ Improvements in systems (child welfare, etc.) and infrastructure
  - ☐ Others? (describe)
- Who is the program designed to help and how?
- Is the program supported by the community? Are there members of the community that actively advocate for continuing the program? Does the program have strong Tribal Council support?
- What, if anything, would have to change if the program would continue? (For example, will any of the following change: the person or office that oversees the program, data collection processes, or target population?)
- If the program has already begun, is anything known about early indicators of its effects? Where has it been most successful? What lessons have we learned about the program?

Creating the Legacy

This part includes more targeted prompts surrounding the key elements of sustainability and helps sites think of ways to build a program so that it rests on the natural supports of the community and can be continued without the help or support of the Center. Center leads can use the prompts contained in this part to help sites plan for how the program can become a successful part of how things are done and the services that are offered in the community.

There are three categories of legacy creation addressed below. They are Program Support; Organizational Support; and Fiscal Support.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Creating a program that is sustainable requires ongoing support and resources to help the program remain effective and continue to achieve its goal. The following discussion questions can help to determine the type and extent of the supports and resources that will be required for day to day operation of the program.

Training

- Does the program require any training? If so, how will training be provided to new and existing program staff?
- What would be lost if training could not continue?
- Given the turnover that often exists in programs, how will the history and vision of the program be integrated into training for new employees? How will current employees and those that have extensive knowledge of the program be able to transfer their knowledge to others?

Fidelity Tracking Processes

Assuring fidelity of the program is the process of making sure the program closely follows and is carried out in a way that is consistent with what the creators of the program wanted.

- What parts of the fidelity tracking process can be continued? Who should be involved? How?

- Will the fidelity tracking process need to change in order to continue? If so, what needs to change?

- How will the fidelity tracking process be used as a learning tool, identifying what is working as well as where the program and organization need to learn and grow?

Identification and Use of Data

- What program data should continue to be gathered? For example: number of people served, fidelity to the program, effects of the programs etc.

- What program data should no longer be gathered?

- How will program data be used to identify whether the program needs to be adapted in order to better fit the needs of the community?

Community Driven Evaluation

- Do community driven evaluation results inform program planning and ongoing program operations? If we have been undergoing an evaluation, will it continue? Will it convert to a continuous quality improvement (CQI)[1]/fidelity monitoring type of evaluation?

- If we have been working with an external evaluator, will that continue, or will we need to develop internal evaluation capacity?

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Organizational support includes program management and the resources required keep it running. It includes the organizational processes and policies that need to be in place to maintain a program and support its continued operation as well as planning for succession and dealing with transitions in leadership.

[1] Casey Family Programs and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement define CQI as "the complete process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and problems and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions." National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement and Casey Family Programs. (2005). *Using continuous quality improvement to improve child welfare practice*.

Program Management and Leadership-Succession

- Is the program integrated into the operations of the agency/organization?
- Who will oversee this program on a permanent basis?
- If there is a change in leadership, how will that be addressed through training? How will we ensure the next leader has the necessary qualifications to run the program?
- How will tribal and program leadership, program staff and community work together to make sure the program is continued? To make sure culture guides the way things are done? What roles will each group have?

Community Partnerships

- Who in the Tribal community is this work connected to and why?
- Are there any partnerships that exist outside of the Tribal community and what is their role?
- What partnerships need to continue and why? Who else needs to be involved?

Organizational Partnerships

- Where does the program fit within the larger community structure or Tribal organization?
- Are there other organizations (i.e. health, mental health, education, substance abuse prevention, law enforcement etc.) to which this program is connected and why?
- What other partnerships need to continue and why? Do new partnerships need to be created?

Communication

- Does the program have a method of communication that serves to maintain ongoing support?

- What policies or procedures need to be developed for the program to be continued? This could relate to the program itself or building support for its continuation.

- How will these policies and procedures be created and shared?

Data Gathering

- What type of data will be gathered? Who will gather the data? How often? Remember: data is not just contained in an electronic database, there are many other sources of program related data.

- Where are data going to be entered and stored?

- How are data going to be organized and analyzed? What is the process for sharing the data and figuring what the data mean? Who will be responsible for this work? Is there a need for a data sharing agreement? If so, do we have one?

FISCAL SUPPORT

Continuation of a program includes determining what funding is needed to support direct services, staff, and organizational resources. It is helpful to have diverse and/or multiple funding sources in the event one source fails to materialize or is discontinued.

Funding Program Services

- What personnel, technology, and other resources are necessary to carry out the program? Does the program have adequate staff to achieve the program's goals? Are there any changes needed to support program management, staff, and other resources?

- What will be the annual cost to sustain the program, factoring in direct services as well as the ongoing operation and organizational infrastructure?

- What funding may be needed to support an existing program evaluator? Is there anyone on staff with this expertise?

Funding Streams

- Does the program have a combination of stable and flexible funding?

- Does the program have sustained funding?
- Are there policies/resolutions in place to help ensure sustained funding?
- What existing opportunities might be available to incorporate funding for program supports?
- Do you utilize funding through 638 contracting, Tribal compact, Title IVB/E or other tribal governance funding that would require a Tribally designated IRB or the tribe having special rules around the use of data?

Appendix I: Community Driven Evaluation Planning Tool

Center for
Native Child
and Family Resilience

Community Driven Evaluation Planning Tool

Using the Community Driven Evaluation Planning Tool

Community driven evaluation is the process of identifying, articulating, and understanding a program's value or outcomes. If a project site's program or intervention is the story about how they build resilience among Native families, then evaluation is the journey between that vision, what they do (the work and activities), and the outcomes of that work. It is the story of how their vision leads to results for children and families.

Native people have a wealth of diverse languages, worldviews, teachings, and experiences. Long before western researchers took up the mantle of scientific inquiry, Native people pursued knowledge and balance through intense interaction and observation with every aspect of their social, spiritual, and natural worlds. Indigenous Ways of Knowing honor the interconnectedness of all things and encapsulate the power of the current moment as it is woven together with lessons learned and passed on through deep time. Despite periods of great upheaval caused by colonial impositions and federal Indian policy, Indigenous knowledge and Native nations persist and thrive.

Native nations are working to recover, preserve, and decolonize their communities. It is with this knowledge that the Center seeks to work with communities to build tribal capacity and bolster tribal self-determination through a community driven evaluation process.

The Community Driven Evaluation Planning Tool will help guide and empower project sites through the evaluation process. The Center team will use the tool to initiate and foster ongoing guided conversations with project sites to build stories of effectiveness. The Center team will work with project sites to take stock of where they are in their story, and where they want and need assistance in getting to where they hope to go. In your discussions with project sites, you should identify and consider the purpose evaluation might serve for each community.

Ultimately, The Center will use this tool to identify community values and inform the development of individualized community driven evaluation plans, which could include one or more of the following:

- Outcome evaluations, which could help project sites understand if the program is having the intended effects
- Implementation or process evaluations to identify the extent to which project sites are running their program as intended
- Cost evaluations, in which project sites figure out how much their program costs to operate
- Quality assurance plans to help the project site team implement the program in a way that aligns with what they want

Each evaluation plan will be shared with and ultimately approved by the Children's Bureau, as required by our cooperative agreement. However, this is intended to be an iterative and collaborative process between the Center team and project sites. This tool is meant to foster bidirectional learning and the creation of a community driven evaluation plan that accurately reflects and aligns with the needs of each project site.

How to use this tool

The Center team will facilitate discussions with project sites using questions from the first three sections as prompts to further expound on what communities want to know, what they already know, and further understand and capture community values. The first three sections of this tool will help evoke important information needed to complete the final "Community Driven Evaluation Plan" section. You should tailor these questions as appropriate to each project site. Instructions are included in italics. The final section includes tables that capture evaluation questions, information sources, responsibilities, and a timeline of evaluation activities. The Center team will summarize the information collected during discussions to populate this section. To support this effort, the Center team and project sites can consider using visioning exercises, small group discussions, focus groups, talking circles, or one-on-one conversations. When the Community Driven Evaluation Plan is ready, you should share it with the project sites to ensure that we all have a shared understanding of the work ahead, and who will be responsible for each component.

1. Defining Key Terms

When first engaging with the project site, take time to come to a common understanding of key terms that will be used throughout the evaluation. It is essential to honor Indigenous Ways of Knowing throughout this process. Indigenous people have distinct training, knowledge, cultural protocols, and experience that informs how they might approach evaluation. The communities are the experts on their history and program development. This is a community driven evaluation; care must be taken not to impose a western academic perspective onto the process of evaluation planning. The Center team might ask the following questions to understand and define key terms:

- How does the community understand evaluation?
- What evaluation terms are the community comfortable using?
- What approach is in keeping with your values as a community?
- How do you prefer to communicate?

If the project site discusses terms like "fidelity," "quality assurance plan or continuous program improvement," or "outcomes," please ask them to describe what these terms mean to them.

2. Developing Evaluation Questions

The following questions are intended to help the project site identify what they want to learn about their program. The Center team can work with project sites to identify what they are seeking to find and what information is needed to inform the process. As discussions unfold, it is important to engage all relevant partners or knowledge bearers throughout the process.

Remember to be purposeful in communication and check-in regularly with partners throughout the process to ensure everyone is aligned in understanding what is formulated.

Who should be involved in evaluation planning activities? How will each person be involved? (They may be advisors, or help conduct the evaluation plan, such as a program evaluator working in partnership with Center staff and advisors.)

Eligibility: What are the eligibility criteria for participating in the program? Who is the program designed for? For example, it might be at-risk Native youth from [project site community] between the ages of 10 and 19 or teen parents under the age of 21.

Consent: What is the planned consent process? Is informed consent needed? For example, you might plan to gather consent prior to the start of the program or participants will sign assent forms at the first program session. If you plan to work with youth, you might stipulate that participants must have both signed parental consent and youth assent forms in order to participate. You might note that not consenting to participate in the evaluation will not affect participation in the program.

Setting: Where will the program take place? Is the program designed to take place in a particular setting or service area? For example, a school, community center, or within the sovereign jurisdiction of particular tribes?

Administration/collection of information: Who will collect/gather information? At what points do they collect this information? For example, at program enrollment and exit or at program enrollment and 6 months after program exit? Who will analyze the information collected, and how? For example, X will enter it into an Excel spreadsheet, which they will use to automatically calculate numbers.

What outcomes do you want to achieve from your program? How do you see the story of effectiveness unfolding for your program? For example, what do you hope to see in families after they complete the program? What does success look like for you and your community? How will you know if the program is working? What are the local and cultural indications of success? What does achieving your outcomes look like? For example, you might ask– How many families reunify, are fewer families referred to child welfare, or how are community members engaging in cultural traditions?

If the answer is yes to any of the aforementioned questions, be sure to discuss and/or follow up with the project site leads to discuss possible information sources (such as enrollment, participation), when and how those data are collected, and who collects it.

What do you want to know about your program's implementation? Do you want to know if it is being delivered as intended? Do you want to document how your program should be implemented? Do you want to know how many hours of service people typically receive through your program? Do you want to document what services you are providing through your program? Do you want to document the challenges and successes of implementing this program? Do you want to know about the types of families you serve*?*

If the answer is yes to any of the aforementioned questions, be sure to discuss and/or follow up with the project site leads to discuss possible information sources (such as enrollment, participation), when and how those data are collected, and who collects it.

What do you want to know about the costs of delivering your program? What would you want to learn from a cost study? Do you have a process in mind? Do you want to understand cost per person served? Do you want to know how much each component of your program costs? Do you want to know how much it costs to start up this program? Do you want to know how much it costs to run the program, once it's set up? Do you want to know how much money you save families or your community by offering these services?

If the answer is yes to any of the aforementioned questions, be sure to discuss and/or follow up with the project site leads to discuss possible information sources, how and when data are collected, and who collects it (for example, do they track how much time each type of staff spends on the program? Do they have cost estimates for all partners' work on this program? Do they know or can they find out how much their fixed costs are—cost for space, equipment, overhead, information technology, and human resources, etc.?).

What evaluation study permissions are needed? A key part of the evaluation process is ensuring you follow local approval processes for working with and collecting information from children and families. Before you collect any information, it is essential that you engage local approval bodies to gain permission. Depending on your community you may be required to engage some combination of:

- Local IRB
- Tribal or regional IRB
- Local policy councils and/or tribal councils
- Local spiritual leaders, knowledge bearers, or Elders

What is the estimated timeline for approval/review? How often do relevant approval bodies meet? What documentation is needed? For example, do you need to get a tribal resolution passed? Do you need to establish an MOU or agreement of collaboration and participation from partners? Do you have a data ownership plan in place? Have you thought about data access and storage? Have you identified and established a plan to adhere to local mandatory reporting processes?

3. Information sources to inform the story

What do you already know about how your program is working, and how do you know? Do you have an indication of demand for the program? For example, is there a waitlist for the program? Do you have information sources that demonstrate program effectiveness? For example, are children returned to their families more quickly? Do you have information on participation? For example, do you collect enrollment forms or attendance records? Do elders support or champion the program? Do you monitor referrals or have sources of information that show the community and elders support the program? Do you have a process in place to monitor ongoing program activities (quality assurance plan or continuous program improvement plan)?

How do you measure the success of your program? What do you see as the benefits of this effort (what are the outcomes or values from your program)? How do you measure that outcome or value of interest? When do you use these measures? For example, if you want to see participants more connected to their spirituality and cultural identity, you might measure that with the Native American Spirituality Scale or through attendance at ceremony or enacting certain cultural or spiritual rites. You might employ a measure with eligible participants at the start and end of the program to observe changes in connection to spirituality and identity.

Be sure to also indicate if a project site wants to measure a particular value or outcome but does not know how to.

What other information sources exist that you are not currently using? What are the barriers to accessing this information? Do you have agreements in place with other agencies or partners to

access this information? If not, do you need an agreement to access the information?

4. Evaluation Plan

Instructions: *After ongoing discussions with project sites, use the information gathered from the first three sections to fill out the final Community Driven Evaluation Plan section. This section includes tables that capture evaluation questions, information sources, responsibilities, and a timeline of activities. Examples are provided in grey.*

Only fill out the tables relevant to the types of study that project sites are interested in conducting. Mark sections as N/A if sites are not interested in particular evaluation options.

Implementation or process evaluation: What you want to know about how your program works

Evaluation questions	Information sources	Who will collect this information?	When will this information be collected?	Who will analyze this information?
Is the program delivered as intended?	*1. Observation checklists* *2. Case review notes*	*1. [Name, Role]* *2. [Name, Role]*	*1. Weekly, from Sept 2019 through Aug 2020*	*1. [Name, Role]* *2. [Name, Role]*

Areas of assistance desired for implementation or process study:

Examples: Creating an observation tool to document fidelity, developing a QA process, analyzing qualitative data.

Outcome Evaluation: How you will know if your program is successful

Evaluation questions	Information sources	Who will collect this information?	When will this information be collected?	Who will analyze this information?
Does the program improve family wellness?	*Indian Family Wellness Assessment*	*[Name, Role]*	*At baseline, and at end of program*	*[Name, Role]*

If the project site is interested in outcome evaluation ensure you gather information on: the eligibility criteria for participating in the program, the planned consent process, the setting of the evaluation, who will administer the program, and who will collect/gather information and at what intervals.

Areas of assistance desired for outcome evaluation:

Examples: How can we measure family wellness? How can we show that children are returned to their families after participating in our program?

Cost evaluation: How you know how much it costs to operate your program

Evaluation questions	Information sources	Who will collect this information?	When will this information be collected?	Who will analyze this information?
What are the ongoing costs to running this intervention?	*Time-use study*	*[Name, Role]*	*Weekly, for one month*	*[Name, Role]*

Areas of assistance desired for cost study:

Examples: How do we find out how much it costs to run our program? How can we tell funders how much each component of our program costs?

Evaluation timeline

Add key dates here for what we learned above. For example: when to get IRB approval and how long it may take; when you plan to start the evaluation; when data collection activities will occur.

Appendix J: Sample Evaluation Plan

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

9/14/2020

Yéil Koowú Shaawát Evaluation Plan

This document describes the implementation, cost, and outcome evaluation plan for the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum, a service provided by the Tribal Family and Youth Services (TFYS) department of the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. This plan was informed by a series of calls and site visits between the Center team and the project site staff. This document is informed by the previously developed project-driven evaluation planning tool.

Program goals and anticipated outcomes. The Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum is a family-focused, culturally based counseling and treatment model that addresses domestic violence, child maltreatment, and intergenerational trauma. The curriculum addresses intergenerational trauma as the root causes of child maltreatment through group work and discussions with Native women in southeast Alaska. The group is composed of women who are grandmothers, mothers, and pregnant and parenting women. The women of the group have all had previous (or have ongoing) contact with child welfare agencies. The women have survived significant traumas and often have endured lives full of childhood abuse, domestic violence, victimization, substance use disorder, and many other mental health challenges. A fundamental aspect of this curriculum is healing trauma and thus intervening upon and preventing child maltreatment through a reclamation of Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural identity, and peer and kinship support systems.

The Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum takes a strength-based, holistic approach to healing, which emphasizes the importance of cultural resiliencies and protective factors (Harper Browne, 2014; Roundtree and Smith, 2016). Such protective factors center on affirming and restoring Native identity through connecting with locally distinct Native cosmologies and spiritual traditions. These rich traditions include, among other things, traditional food-ways, kinship circles, the oral tradition, song, dance, Native language, and traditional healing practices.

One of the women in the group helped orient us to an important Tlingit maxim, "Haa Shuka'", which escapes meaningful translation to English but roughly encompasses the notion of our ancestors, ourselves, and our future generations. More importantly, she elaborated on what it means within the context of healing and living in a good Tlingit way. Within tribal contexts, manifestations of trauma or disease are often viewed as spiritual diseases or imbalances. Within a Western approach, disease is "treated," whereas within a tribal setting, disease is "healed" and viewed from a holistic approach to wellness (Cross et al., 2000).

The term Haa Shuka' might be understood as living in harmony, beauty, or balance, and encompasses a person's place in relation to the universe. It encapsulates life history, order in the world, cosmology, the importance of time and space, and the movement or growth of living and nonliving things. The term in part conveys living in a good way within our

environment. Like so many others in Indian Country[1], this term is esoteric and a lived concept. Each community has distinct notions of and words that convey well-being and living in balance. Traditional health practices typically focus on reintegration of basic aspects of personhood and restoring balance. Studies have found that many American Indian/Alaska Native people pursue wellness through traditional healing and spiritual practices; it is not uncommon for them to seek help from both traditional healers and Western providers (Novins et al., 1999; Buchwald et al., 2000).

A woman from one group explained to us that she and her ancestors endured centuries of accumulated cultural trauma, historical trauma, and intergenerational trauma through centuries of exposure to racism, warfare, violence, and catastrophic disease. As a result, their Haa Shuka' has been in many ways cut down and lost. However, she described her Haa Shuka' as being restored by her participation the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum's activities. These understandings provide the base for our evaluation plan and act as a cultural metaphor for how the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum restores Haa Shuka' through women's healing journeys.

The Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum's goals and anticipated outcomes include a reduction and prevention of child maltreatment and a revitalization of Haa Shuka' through increased:

- Cultural connectedness
- Healthy decision-making skills
- Nonviolent communication skills
- Respect for self and others
- Sense of belonging
- Awareness of trauma
- Sobriety
- Mental health
- Healthy relationships
- Coping skills

Program description. The Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum model integrates Western therapies (Gestalt therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and motivational interviewing) and Native spiritual healing practices (sweat lodge ceremonies, medicine making and gathering, purification and healing ceremonies, talking circles and teachings on Native culture).

The curriculum was developed over the past 15 years by clinician Amalia Monreal, LCSW, of the TFYS Counseling program, and features three phases. Phase I addresses anger, stress, and communication; Phase II focuses on family of origin issues and past/present relationships; and Phase III provides participants with a sexual abuse talking circle. Each phase is composed of 12 lessons that are implemented once a week. Each lesson takes approximately two hours to facilitate, and

[1] This evaluation plan uses a number of terms to describe the original or first inhabitants of North America and their communities, including Indigenous, American Indian, Indian Country, Native, Alaska Native, and tribal. Many people have strong opinions about which term or terms are correct. However, none of these terms is necessarily correct in a given instance. They are used to categorize tremendously diverse people and communities for largely bureaucratic and academic purposes. The origins of these terms are tied to colonization and the imposition of settler states across North America. In this evaluation plan, we use the terms American Indian and Alaska Native as well as Native, Indigenous, and tribe or tribal depending on context. We also distinguish between American Indians and Alaska Natives, because these terms denote important cultural distinctions between the Indigenous people of the continental U.S. and those of Alaska.

each phase builds upon the previous phase in terms of content, depth, and rigor. To enter Phase III of the curriculum, participants must complete Phase I and Phase II and meet with a counselor. Participants that complete the curriculum twice are eligible to become facilitators.

Over the years, Ms. Monreal has shaped a flexible and non-linear approach to completing her curriculum, and she encourages women who leave the program before completion to complete their healing journey when they are ready. This has led to some women completing or repeating the program across years. Ms. Monreal describes her approach to healing as:

> One woman at a time; it's not a head-strong, head-long, straight into making it "go big" across the globe. It starts with one woman; it's one woman, teaching, listening, sharing, pouring, supporting, another woman, who does the same for another and another in a circle; a sacred circle. Women in a courageous journey together. Traveling together on a path of self-exploration, self-examination, introspection. Looking through the lenses of their trauma to comprehend, understand, forgive and accept their past, acknowledging and owing their own personal journey into self-determination; independence and freedom, to identify their newly discovered self's and change the future for their children.

The curriculum is grounded in Southeast Alaska traditional tribal values associated with the Tlingit and Haida Central Council, which include:

- Discipline and Obedience to the Traditions of Our Ancestors
- Respect for Self, Elders, and Others
- Respect for Nature and Property
- Patience
- Pride in Family, Clan, and Tradition Is Found in Love, Loyalty and Generosity
- Be Strong in Mind, Body, and Spirit
- Humor
- Hold Each Other Up
- Listen Well and With Respect
- Speak With Care
- We Are Stewards of the Air, Land, and Sea
- Reverence for Our Creator
- Live in Peace and Harmony
- Be Strong and Have Courage

Over the course of the last several years, Ms. Monreal has refined the curriculum. With the help of the Center team, she is further refining and digitizing the curriculum for easier facilitation and replication. As part of this ongoing process, Ms. Monreal, with support from the Center team and Tlingit scholar Dr. Lance Twitchell, continue to infuse Tlingit traditions and lifeways into the curriculum. In recent months, Ms. Monreal has successfully implemented the curriculum virtually due to the ongoing global pandemic. We anticipate that all aspects of the curriculum and evaluation will be administered virtually until such time as the Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska Tlingit decide that activities can resume in person.

Evaluation planning context. The implementation and outcome evaluation questions derive from several important sources and processes over the course of the last year. First among them are Ms. Monreal and the women participants of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum. The women engaged in a series of talking circles and information gatherings (both on site and virtually) to help the Center team better understand the core components of the curriculum, how it is implemented, outcomes associated with participation, and best line of evaluative inquiry to pursue, to ensure that reflects local cultural values and the program's expressed long-term goals. Whether through weekly check-ins, site visits, mind mapping, or talking circles, the information we gathered directly from the facilitator(s) and participants of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum provide an emic perspective of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum and the cultural and metaphorical logic that underpins its approach to healing.

Most notably, we conducted a ribbon ceremony whereby the participants and Center team entered into a circle of trust. That circle of trust was maintained as we came together in talking circles and other venues to understand women's lived experiences in the curriculum and the ongoing context of their healing journeys. Through our engagement with Ms. Monreal and her group, we were able to identify important outcomes of interest that connect to women's experiences in the group while also mapping closely onto the traditional values of the Tlingit and Haida. The women of the group also helped us understand the appropriate method for collecting data and identifying information sources. Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) consultant Dr. Priscilla Day informed the formation of the evaluation questions as well as the information sources and helped ensure the evaluation approach is both culturally and scientifically rigorous.

The Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum sits in a complex operating environment where results are very difficult to predict due to dynamic non-linear cause and effect relationships that continue to evolve. We approach this evaluative work with an adaptive management approach, which allows us to balance analytic and cultural rigor while responding to the emergent needs of the community and lessons learned through the evaluation process. To that end, the evaluation questions and methods described in this evaluation plan represent the evaluative potential based on the interests and needs of the project.

As we begin evaluation activities, it is possible that new lines of inquiry may arise, existing evaluation questions may shift to maintain relevance to the curriculum, and unexpected and emergent outcomes may necessitate further exploration. As a result, this evaluation plan is designed to be a living document, which allows us the flexibility to react and pursue project-driven evaluative inquiry that maintains a focus on the prevention and intervention of child maltreatment while also reflecting the needs of the project, as budget and timelines allow and with the appropriate approval by the Children's Bureau (CB). The evaluation team will be meeting with Ms. Monreal on a monthly basis to assess and support any emergent issues during the evaluation.

The first section of this document describes the plans for each component of the evaluation, including the evaluation questions Yéil Koowú Shaawát seeks to answer, information sources, and plans for collecting and analyzing information. The second section gives a more detailed description of the information sources and outcome domains that will be used to tell the story of success. The final section presents the evaluation timeline, including plans for submitting the IRB package and completing all analysis. Appendix A includes the proposed data collection instruments.

1. Evaluation Plans

The proposed evaluation will have three components: descriptive implementation, cost, and outcome evaluations. This section briefly describes each component and provides a table for each that identifies the

evaluation questions of interest to the project, the information sources, who will collect the information and when, and who will be responsible for analysis of that information.

Implementation evaluation

The implementation evaluation includes the following research questions:

1. **To what extent was the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum delivered as intended?**
    a. How did curriculum implementation change over time, if at all?
        i. How, if at all, did COVID-19 impact the way the curriculum was implemented?
    b. What are the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing the curriculum?
    c. In what ways did participation change over time, if at all?

2. **How did women engage in the curriculum, including Tlingit cultural traditions?**
    a. In what ways did women engage in cultural teachings, activities, and topics provided through programming?
        i. How do women feel about their experience in the group?

3. **Is there any relationship between participant characteristics or experiences (including prior experience with the curriculum, past trauma, experience with child welfare, and current experience with the pandemic) and successful completion of the curriculum (individual phases or in full)?**
    a. Who are the repeaters? (age, background, family status)
    b. What are the reasons women leave?
    c. What are the reasons women come back?

The implementation evaluation will focus on the entire three phases of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum and will assess the extent to which the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, including measurement of service reach, retention, and curriculum session offerings. The approach to evaluating the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum takes into account the need to continually adapt and improve the programming, policies and procedures, and organizational strategies to best serve Native women in the region. Over nearly two decades, Ms. Monreal has been the lone facilitator of this curriculum. Now that the curriculum is being digitized and the core elements of the curriculum are solidified, the focus of the implementation evaluation is to better understand areas for continuous quality improvement (CQI), curriculum improvement, and potential needs for facilitator support and replication. To this end, Mary Rivera, a two-time graduate of the curriculum, is supporting final curriculum development work and will be facilitating the curriculum with support from Ms. Monreal in October of 2020. If registration and uptake into the group is more than 10, a second cohort will be created, and Ms. Monreal will facilitate.

We will be using five primary sources of data for the implementation evaluation. The implementation evaluation will rely on attendance logs, facilitator fidelity logs, weekly sticky note polls, interviews, and talking circles to assess participation, enrollment, lesson delivery, curriculum fidelity, and participant engagement. These sources are described in detail in section 2, below.

Data analysis activities for the implementation evaluation will include descriptive analysis. We will analyze data at the level of the individual and cohort. Information gleaned from attendance and fidelity logs will inform CQI efforts, and the

process will recursively inform curriculum refinements and adaptations over time. For interviews, talking circles, and narrative data, qualitative analysis will follow the tenets of grounded theory, whereby the evaluator conducts a thematic analysis to identify emergent patterns or themes as they relate to study questions. Over the course of the last year, Ms. Monreal and her team have piloted the implementation of fidelity and monitoring tools and have demonstrated a strong aptitude for collecting high quality data. Ms. Monreal will continue these processes with support from the Center team during the formal evaluation period. Table 1. shows who will collect the data, using what method, at what intervals.

Table 1. Implementation evaluation: How the curriculum works

Questions about how curriculum works	Information sources	Who will collect this information?	When will this information be collected?	Who will analyze this information
To what extent was the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum delivered as intended? • How did curriculum implementation change over time, if at all? ○ How if at all, did COVID-19 impact the way the curriculum was implemented? • What are the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from implementing the curriculum? • In what ways did participation change over time if at all?	1. Fidelity logs 2. Facilitator notes 3. Sticky note polls after each session 4. Attendance logs 5. Facilitator interviews/talking circles	1. Ms. Rivera, Ms. Monreal, and a consultant to be named later will collect fidelity logs, facilitator notes, attendance logs. 2. Ms. Rivera, Ms. Monreal, and a consultant to be named later will facilitate interviews and talking circles.	1. Weekly, from October 2020 through August 2021 2. Interviews and talking circles will be conducted at the conclusion of each phase (approximately January 2021, April 2021, and August 2021).	1. Mike Cavanaugh, with support from Ms. Monreal and/or advisor to be named later
How did women engage in the curriculum, including Tlingit cultural traditions? • In what ways did women engage in cultural teachings, activities, and topics provided through programming?	1. Fidelity logs 2. Facilitator notes 3. Facilitator interview 4. Virtual talking circles with participants	1. Ms. Rivera, Ms. Monreal, and a consultant to be named later will collect fidelity logs, facilitator notes, and sticky notes at conclusion of each session.	1. At the conclusion of each phase (approximately January 20201, April 2021, and August 2021)	1.Mike Cavanaugh, with support from Ms. Monreal and/or advisor to be named later

• How do women feel about their experience in the group?	5. Sticky note polls at the conclusion of each session	2. Ms. Rivera, Ms. Monreal, and a consultant to be named later will facilitate talking circles with participants. 3. Mike will conduct facilitator interviews, with support from the Center team.		
Is there any relationship between prior experience with the curriculum and successful completion of the curriculum? • Who are the repeaters? (age, background, family status, etc.) • What are the reason women leave? • What are the reasons women come back?	1. Attendance log 2. Retrospective administrative data if available 3. interviews/talking circle with repeaters	1.Ms. Rivera and Ms. Monreal 2. Ms. Monreal 3. Mike Cavanaugh, with help from Center team	1. At the conclusion of Phase I 2. TBD 3. At the conclusion of Phase I	1.Mike Cavanaugh, with support from Ms. Monreal and/or advisor to be named later

Cost evaluation

The cost evaluation includes the following research question:

1. **What are the costs to implementing and refining the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum?**

The cost evaluation will analyze costs to implement and refine the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum, to better understand the level of effort needed to successfully implement Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum in Southeast Alaska, which will be informative for organizations attempting implementation in other tribal settings. The cost evaluation will collect costs associated with implementing the curriculum as a whole, including any CNCFR team and project site time and resources dedicated to CNCFR activities that occur during the evaluation reference period, such as legacy planning and the refinement of data management tools. Table 2 includes the primary cost evaluation question, who will collect the data, using what method, and at what intervals.

Using a cost reporting spreadsheet, costs will be collected in terms of the level of effort needed for project staff, volunteers, and consultants; costs of materials; and indirect costs. This data related to personnel and non-personnel costs to implement the program as whole will be the basis for estimating program costs. These costs will be collected during the evaluation reference period and annualized to present the costs per year. Potential categories within the cost reporting spreadsheet will include personnel costs for facilitators, consultants, and volunteers. The cost reporting spreadsheet will also capture office expenses, overhead expenses, and materials needed to implement the curriculum.

Table 2. Cost evaluation: What the curriculum costs

Questions about curriculum costs	Information sources	Who will collect this information?	When will this information be collected?	Who will analyze this information
What are the costs for implementing and refining the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum?	Cost reporting spreadsheet (Level of effort, materials, indirect costs)	Ms. Monreal	Quarterly during data collection period	Mike Cavanaugh, with support from the Center team or an advisor to be named later

Outcome evaluation

The outcome evaluation includes the following research questions:

1. **To what extent do the teachings and lessons of Yéil Koowú Shaawát strengthen a woman's Haa Shuká during her healing journey?**
2. **How does Yéil Koowú Shaawát restore cultural resilience and promote healing within women? Their children and families? The community?**
    a. How does restoring cultural resilience contribute to the protective capacity of women?
    b. How do women engage in Tlingit and other Indigenous values after experiencing the curriculum?
    c. How are cultural values being used at home and in the community?
3. **How does Yéil Koowú Shaawát contribute to healthy parenting skills and behavior?**
    a. Do women feel they have improved relationships with their children and families?
    b. Are women able to engage in increased self-regulation when parenting children?

Like the implementation evaluation, the outcome evaluation will follow up to two cohorts of women throughout the three phases of the curriculum. Each cohort will have a maximum of 10 women.

The outcome evaluation will use three potential primary sources of data: interviews, talking circles, and a personal reflection. Methodology for these sources is described in detail in section 2. All women will be asked to participate in talking circles and interviews to help us understand women's perceptions of health and wellbeing (Haa Shuka') at the completion of each phase. Women will be asked to provide a personal reflection at entry and exit of the curriculum in one of three forms: participant letters to self, photovoice, or visual narrative. Each form will be supplemented with a meaning making interview. Personal reflections will contribute to our understanding of their cultural connectedness and restoration of Haa Shuka' over time. This approach further empowers women with the choice of how they'd like to tell their story. The agency to choose the form of personal reflection is especially important for trauma survivors as their previous experiences are often associated with a lack of control or choices. These tools also provide insight into women's developing resilience, particularly around decision-making skills, nonviolent communication skills, respect for self and others, stress-management strategies, and planning for and taking steps to realize a positive future—all important elements of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum. The evaluation team will use similar prompts and questions for the letters to self, photovoice, or visual narrative to obtain data that can be easily synthesized regardless of information source.

We anticipate that some women will not produce a personal reflection, and as a result, we will rely on a convenience sample based on the readiness and usability of women's creations. Frequent collaboration between the Center team and Ms. Monreal and her staff is vital to the process of identifying emergent findings. The grounded theory approach allows for the integration of unexpected and emergent findings—often the most valuable and applicable results of research.

Each cohort's responses will be analyzed for trends, this may reflect differences in emphasis among facilitators, age of participants, dosage, group concerns, or other issues. Table 3. shows who will collect the data, using what method, and at what intervals.

Table 3. Outcome evaluation: What success looks like

Questions about success of curriculum	Information sources	Who will collect this information?	When will this information be collected?	Who will analyze this information
1.To what extent do the teachings and lessons of Yéil Koowú Shaawát strengthen a woman's Haa Shuká during her healing journey? 2.How does Yéil Koowú Shaawát restore cultural resilience and promote healing within women? Their children and families? The community? • How does restoring cultural resilience contribute to the protective capacity of women? • How do women engage in Tlingit and other Indigenous values after experiencing the curriculum? • How are cultural values being used at home and in the community?	1.Interviews and talking circles 2. Personal reflection (either letter to self, photovoice, or visual narrative) and follow up meaning making interview	1. Ms. Rivera, Ms. Monreal, and a consultant to be named later will facilitate talking circles with participants. 2. Ms. Rivera, Ms. Monreal, and a consultant to be named later will collect letters, photos, or visual narratives.	1. Talking circles and interviews will be completed at the conclusion of each phase (approximately January 2021, April 2021, and August 2021). 2. Letters, photos, or visual narrative will be collected at entry and exit.	Mike Cavanaugh, with assistance from the Center team and where applicable member checking[2] from participants
3.How does Yéil Koowú Shaawát contribute to healthy parenting skills and behavior? • Do women feel they have improved relationships with their children and families?	1.Interviews and talking circles 2. Personal reflection (either letter to self, photovoice, or visual narrative) and follow up meaning making interview	1. Ms. Rivera, Ms. Monreal, and a consultant to be named later will facilitate talking circles with participants. 2. Ms. Rivera, Ms. Monreal, and a	1. Talking circles and interviews will be completed at the conclusion of each phase (approximately January 2021, April 2021, and August 2021).	Mike Cavanaugh, with assistance from the Center team and where applicable member checking from participants

[2]Member checking or respondent validation, is a technique used by researchers to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity, and transferability of study data.

• Are women able to engage in increased self-regulation when parenting children?		consultant to be named later will collect letters, photos, or visual narratives.	2. Letters, photos, or visual narrative will be collected at entry and exit	

2. Information sources to tell the story of success

We will use multiple information sources for the evaluations in order to include as many perspectives on the curriculum as possible (Table 4). Ms. Monreal will lead most data collection activities. The evaluation lead and Center team will support data collection efforts through training and technical assistance.

Information sources for the implementation and outcome evaluations were identified and created after close consultation with Ms. Monreal and women in the group. We created information sources, such as the fidelity log, that are not burdensome and serve the long-term sustainability and quality improvement goals of the curriculum. Our experience led us to identify the most important measures of program success and pointed to data sources best suited to illuminate those measures. For example, we learned after piloting a survey with open ended fields that the women preferred data collection strategies grounded in storytelling or visual approaches to understanding lived experience and growth over time. We also learned that the women preferred the safety of small group talking circles or one-on-one interviews with Ms. Monreal present, rather than surveys. The women also preferred nonlinear, artistic, or visual approaches to telling their stories.

Table 4. Information sources and the evaluations they will inform

Information source	Implementation evaluation	Cost evaluation	Outcome evaluation
Fidelity Log	X		
Attendance log	X		
Staff interviews	X		X
Cost reporting spreadsheet		X	
Administrative data		X	X
Participant interviews	X		X
Talking circles	X		X
Personal reflection (women choose one form) and follow up meaning making interview Option 1. Photos taken by participants Option 2. Letters to self Option 3. Visual narrative			X

Information sources are described below.

Participant interviews: Open-ended, semi-structured interview protocols will guide participant interviews for both the

implementation and outcome evaluations. We will call on previously created protocols as well as lessons learned during previous information gatherings to inform this work. Interviews with facilitators for the implementation evaluation will be conducted by Mike Cavanaugh with support from the Center team. Interviews to supplement visual narratives, photovoice, or letter for the outcome evaluation will be conducted by Ms. Monreal, Ms. Rivera, and a consultant to be named later, with support from the Center team.

Talking Circles: Talking circles will be used for both the implementation and outcome evaluations. Talking circles will help the Center team and project site understand women's perceptions of health and wellbeing (Haa Shuka') at the completion of each phase and will support a better understanding of areas for continuous quality improvement (CQI), curriculum improvement, and potential needs for facilitator support and replication. The Center team employed talking circles with success during initial information gathering efforts during site visits; we will replicate this approach for the evaluation. Talking circles have been used by Native and non-Native researchers alike to create an environment that reflects the oral tradition and is based on Indigenous values of sharing, respect, and honor. For example, a talking circle might open with a smudge or prayer, then each participating member of the circle has the opportunity to speak about the subject or question at hand. Usually no more than three or four open-ended questions guide the conversation. When speaking, a member of the circle might hold a sacred item like a feather, ribbon, or talking stick; when a member is speaking, it is the responsibility of all in the circle to thoughtfully listen without interrupting. When the speaker is finished, they pass the talking stick in a clockwise manner to the next member of the circle. The talking circle provides an equitable space that is reflective of Indigenous approaches to decision making and knowledge sharing. When conducting talking circles, we will take the time to honor local traditions, which may include introductions in the local language, prayer, ceremony, gift exchange, or the sharing of food to set forth a path for good relations. Ms. Monreal, Ms. Rivera, and a consultant to be named later will facilitate talking circles.

Photos: We propose using photovoice as one of three options for women to reflect upon their views and experiences. Photovoice is a qualitative community-based participatory research method to document and reflect women's lived reality. Women who opt into this information gathering method will photograph scenes that highlight assets and concerns, social issues, growth and barriers. The Center team will create prompts to guide the work of the women. Women's responses to selected prompts associated with photos along with follow up meaning making interviews, will contribute to the Center team's and project site's understanding of their cultural connectedness and restoration of Haa Shuka' over time. The Center team will provide logistical support and a brief training to women who opt into this information gathering. Women will utilize their own phones or cameras. Ms. Monreal, Ms. Rivera, and a consultant to be names later will collaborate with participants to interpret the photos they take. Photovoice places "control of knowledge construction . . . in the hands of the participants" (Helm et al., 2015). In addition to the standard consent forms we will gather from all study participants, women who contribute photographs and stories will sign an additional release of information form. Any images and related narrative that may enter the public domain will be approved by TYFS staff and the Tribe.

Letters to self: We propose letters to self as one of three options for women to reflect upon their views and experiences. Women who opt into this information gathering method will complete a letter to their future selves at entry into the program. At the conclusion of the program, they will write letters to their former selves. The Center team will create prompts (similar to photovoice and visual narrative prompts) to guide the work of the women and better understand their healing journey. Women's responses to selected prompts associated with letters to self will contribute to the Center team's and project site's understanding of their cultural connectedness and restoration of Haa Shuka' over time. Ms.

Monreal, Ms. Rivera, and a consultant to be named later, with support from the Center team, will collaborate with the participants to interpret the letters.

Visual narrative: We propose visual narrative as one of three options for women to reflect upon their views and experiences. Women who opt into this information gathering method will create a visual narrative. This could take the form of a drawing, collage, painting, or other form of visual artistic expression. The Center team will create prompts (similar to photovoice and letter prompts) to guide the work of the women and better understand their healing journey. Women's responses to selected prompts associated with visual narratives, along with follow up meaning making interviews, will contribute to the Center team's and project site's understanding of their cultural connectedness and restoration of Haa Shuka' over time. Ms. Monreal, Ms. Rivera, and a consultant to be named later, with support from the Center team, will collaborate with the participants to interpret the visual narratives. Once again, this method replicates (mind mapping[3]) processes used during prior successful information gatherings with women in the group. In addition to standard consent forms for all study participants, women who contribute visual narratives and stories will sign an additional release of information form. Any images and related narrative that may enter the public domain will be approved by TYFS staff and the Tribe.

Staff interview: Mike Cavanaugh, with support from the Center team, will conduct semi-structured interviews with Ms. Monreal and Ms. Rivera to support the implementation evaluation. Questions will focus on supporting CQI efforts and lessons learned over time throughout curriculum implementation. Staff interviews will also support any needed curriculum adaptations and potential needs for facilitator support and replication efforts.

Administrative data: Ms. Monreal will gather relevant administrative data to support both the cost and outcome evaluations. If available, these data will inform outcomes of interest around family reunification and contact with child welfare agencies over time. The data might include Management Information System (MIS) data or child welfare data, and it will include indicators such as demographic information and whether there is any reported or history of substance use, domestic violence, physical abuse, medical neglect, mental injury, neglect, and failure to protect from significant other. The data will also include who attended investigations of child maltreatment, the number of interviews conducted, safety assessment information, and referrals to internal and external services.

Fidelity and attendance logs: The Center team, in conjunction with Ms. Monreal and Ms. Rivera, created fidelity and attendance logs (Appendix B). The fidelity and attendance logs capture how core components of the lesson were taught and whether any adaptation were made. It further incudes space for a description of any adaptations made, challenges experienced during facilitation, cultural teachings, the level of engagement, and facilitator notes. The fidelity logs provide a space to document opportunities for continuous quality assurance and improvement and further assists program

[3] Mind mapping draws out implicit knowledge from grantees using a non-linear approach to identifying key values, theories of change, and outcomes of interest. The process is grounded in the oral tradition and Indigenous Ways of Knowing and has several steps including: creating a picture, identifying trigger words, and reflecting on the whole.

implementation by regularly identifying planned and unplanned adaptations. Ms. Rivera and Ms. Monreal have successfully collected these data over the course of the last year and will replicate similar processes for the implementation evaluation. The information in both logs will support the implementation evaluation.

Sticky note polls: To better understand women's experience within the group as well as their perception of the weekly lessons, Ms. Monreal and Ms. Rivera will conclude each session with a brief sticky note exercise. Women will be encouraged to respond to a prompt about that week's lesson and primary takeaways. In the likely event that lessons are facilitated virtually, the chat box of the video platform will be used to collect participant feedback. The chat box or sticky note approach provides an anonymous safe space for women to react to the prompts. Sticky notes or chat box responses will be collected by facilitators each week and securely transmitted to be analyzed by the Center team to better understand women's experience within the group and perception of the curriculum over time. These data are a low burden approach to help support CQI efforts as well as previously noted implementation evaluation objectives.

Cost reporting spreadsheet: The cost spreadsheet will guide the cost evaluation (Appendix C). Ms. Monreal will populate the spreadsheet with the costs of running the program including the level of effort to implement program, and ongoing program costs for purposes of replication.

3. Consent procedures

The evaluation will follow proper consent procedures with participating women. Written consent will be gathered from participants prior to the start of the first phase of the curriculum. The Center team will also create an accompanying special release of information form for photos, letters, and visual narratives. The release of information would only apply to participants whose focal images or creations are included in the analysis and reporting. Any future publishing on behalf of the Tribe or the CB would need additional permissions.

Consent documents will provide information about the curriculum, what women can expect by participating, the foreseen risks and benefits of participating, mandatory reporting requirements, and confidentiality surrounding the collection of evaluation data. Women will be given the opportunity to ask questions and have their concerns addressed by a member of the project team. Women may discontinue programming or evaluation inclusion at any time.

4. Evaluation timeline and strategies to ensure success

A successful evaluation relies on several critical tasks occurring in a timely manner. In this section, we list the potential challenges we may encounter and strategies we will employ to ensure success. Table 5 lists key activities and their anticipated dates. Every effort will be made to follow this timeline, but delays in any activity may push out the dates of later activities.

- The data collection timeline is dependent on the CB's approval of the evaluation plan and any additional institutional review board (IRB) approvals. Mathematica will submit the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum IRB package to Mathematica's IRB vendor along with packages for project sites that also do not have tribal IRBs. In addition, Mathematica will submit IRB packages to Mathematica's vendor after the CB has approved the respective evaluation plans. Therefore, information collection for this evaluation will be postponed if the CB or IRB approval processes take longer than anticipated, with the exception of fidelity and attendance log collection during Phase 1 of the curriculum rollout. Phase 1 of the curriculum is expected to begin in November 2020, before IRB approval. However, Ms. Monreal and Ms. Rivera will be able to collect implementation data as a

continuation of their use of fidelity and attendance logs (i.e., no new advance training required).

- The Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum is being implemented during a global pandemic. This poses data collection, attrition, and engagement risks. Ms. Monreal has some experience successfully facilitating the curriculum virtually. She, along with the Center team, will work to monitor attendance and engagement. Because the Center team has already successfully navigated some information gathering virtually, we feel confident that we can facilitate interviews and talking circles virtually. Further, because the women of the group have some agency over the medium in which they choose to tell their story, we anticipate this will empower women to stay engaged and tell their stories.
- The project site plans to identify guiding principles for other tribal communities and/or grantees who endeavor to implement and evaluate the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum. Work is ongoing to create facilitator guides and finalize program development so that other tribal communities can replicate the curriculum. This could create time constraints and competing demands during the evaluation. To combat this challenge, the Center team will support Ms. Monreal where feasible and will help to identify and onboard additional consultants if needed.
- The choice of including participant-led fields of inquiry, including letters to self at entry and exit of the curriculum, photovoice, or visual narrative, as information sources may introduce sample bias. It is likely that those that opt into such information gatherings will correlate to those who have a positive experience with the curriculum. We will assess those participants that do not opt into these information gatherings and acknowledge any identified sample bias in our reporting.
- Ms. Monreal has noted the distrust in some Native communities about engaging in research or evaluation activities. As a result, there is some possibility that this distrust could affect willingness to participate in the project's evaluation. This may be especially true when activities involve a sensitive topic, such as child welfare. To combat this risk, the Center team, alongside Ms. Monreal, will highlight the trust that has been built over time through site visits and previous positive interactions with women in the group. We hope to capitalize on existing relationships within the community to build trust and increase comfort with participation.

Table 5. Evaluation activities and anticipated start and end dates site visit

Activity	Leader	Anticipated start date (month, year)	Anticipated end date (month, year)
Prepare to collect and analyze data October 2020 – November 2020			
Finalize evaluation plan (address comments from the Children's Bureau)	Cavanaugh	September, 2020	October, 2020
Develop data collection procedures	Cavanaugh and Center team with support from Ms. Monreal	September, 2020	November, 2020
Develop protocols and instruments	Cavanaugh and Center team with support from Ms. Monreal	September, 2020	November, 2020
Prepare data collection training materials (For example, administration, content, data storage/security)	Cavanaugh	September, 2020	November, 2020

Prepare and submit IRB package to Health Media Lab IRB	Cavanaugh	September, 2020	November, 2020
Establish data use agreement between TYFS and Mathematica	Cavanaugh and Ms. Monreal	September, 2020	November, 2020
Obtain IRB approval	Cavanaugh	November, 2020	November, 2020
Prepare data analysis training materials (For example, entry, cleaning, scoring, analysis)	Cavanaugh	June, 2021	August, 2021
Collect data December 2020 – August 2021			
Conduct outcome data collection training	Cavanaugh	December, 2020	December, 2020
Enroll participants in evaluation	Ms. Monreal	January, 2021	
Collect information	Ms. Monreal and Ms. Rivera with consultant to be named later	January 2021	August, 2021
Securely transfer, clean, and analyze data September 2021-April 2022			
Share data with Mathematica and JBS	Ms. Monreal	January 2021	August, 2021
Conduct data analysis training	Cavanaugh	September, 2021	
Analyze data	Cavanaugh and Ms. Monreal	September, 2021	December, 2021
Review findings	Ms. Monreal	January, 2022	January, 2022
Draft and approve the evaluation report January 2022 - September 2022			
Finalize report outline and writing assignments	Cavanaugh	January, 2022	February, 2022
Draft evaluation report	Team	February , 2022	March, 2022
Ms. Monreal approves evaluation report	Ms. Monreal	March, 2022	April, 2022
Tribal Council approves evaluation report	Ms. Monreal	April, 2022	April, 2022
Submit evaluation report to JBS	Cavanaugh	May, 2022	May, 2022
JBS Submits evaluation report to the Children's Bureau	JBS	September, 2022	September, 2022

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Appendix K: Center Project Evaluation Briefs

Txin Kaanguˆx Initiative

Evaluation Brief

In 2015, the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island-Tribal Government (ACSPI) established the Txin Kaanguˆx Initiative (TKI), to integrate programs and services and serve the Alaska Native village located in St. Paul Island, Alaska. The phrase "Txin Kaanguˆx" translates roughly to "your health and wellness"; because ACSPI's child welfare cases are centered around domestic violence, child sexual abuse, neglect, or parental substance abuse, TKI offers a holistic healing and wellness package to families. Services offered include cultural activities, behavioral health, youth programs, health programs, victim services, assistance programs, children and family programs, and wellness.

The goal of the Initiative is to provide for the integration of Tribal Government programs, services, departments, divisions, and their employees that provide for the health, welfare, and safety of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Tribal membership and community. Txin Kaanguˆx reflects the desire for a holistic approach to healing and wellness that relies on collaboration and creativity in a broad approach to service provision.

About the Program

The TKI department, under the larger Tribal Government, employs staff in two locations: one office in Anchorage, and another on St. Paul Island. The Tribal Government's Chief Judge works offsite in Sitka.

The intent of TKI was to "empower our community to build strong and resilient families" through the idea of Ataqakun Angˆagˆilix, or "living together as one." By re-centering the approach to individual health on each person's interconnectedness with their entire community (i.e., rather than focusing solely on individual well-being), TKI is returning to traditional values that will help people see their value and role in keeping the entire community safe.

The services included in TKI evolved over several years and include the Healing of the Canoe's Culturally Grounded Life Skills for Youth curriculum, which incorporates culture to prevent substance abuse and suicide and connects the youth to the community's Tribal culture, in addition to victims' services and community wellness activities.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Children's Bureau (CB) funded the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (the Center) to gather and disseminate information about Tribally relevant practice models, interventions, and services that contribute substantively to child maltreatment prevention efforts and family resilience developed by and for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations. The Center partnered with five project sites for four years (2019–2022) to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention/intervention programs for AI/AN children and families. This brief summarizes lessons and findings from the project-driven evaluation conducted with TKI in support of building evidence for Tribally led child welfare initiatives.

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

ALEUT COMMUNITY OF ST. PAUL
COMMUNITY SAFETY & PEACE

Children's Bureau

The following graphic presents a list of ACSPI services:

Cultural Activities	Behavioral Health	Youth	Health	Victim Services	Assistance	Children & Family	Wellness
◊ Cultural Camps ◊ Talking Circles ◊ Native Crafts ◊ Maskaraatan ◊ Unangan Tunuu (UTSLT) ◊ Harvesting Education ◊ Subsistence Preservation ◊ Aleut Evacuation Walk	◊ Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy ◊ Individual & Group Counseling ◊ Pre-treatment for Substance Abuse ◊ Substance Abuse Tx ◊ Aftercare ◊ Crisis Intervention ◊ Sober housing ◊ Prime for Life ◊ ASAP ◊ Healing of the Canoe	◊ Art Activities ◊ Basketball ◊ Sunday School ◊ Youth Tribal Council ◊ Healthy Relationships (teen and adult) ◊ Educational Tutoring ◊ Seabird Camp ◊ Audio/Visual Camp	◊ Community Health Aide ◊ Emergency Medical ◊ Quarantine facilities ◊ FEMA Support ◊ Yearly Clinics (dental, optometry, women's, diabetes etc.) ◊ Medication Disposal ◊ Vaccine Clinics	◊ Advocacy for Sexual Assault/ Abuse & Domestic Violence ◊ Domestic Violence Shelter & Intervention ◊ Victims Rights Assistance ◊ Forensic Interviews/Exams ◊ SAFESTAR ◊ Transitional Housing ◊ Victim Compensation Assistance ◊ Court Support	◊ Food Bank ◊ Emergency Medical Loans ◊ Patient Access to Care ◊ General Assistance ◊ Elder Daily Food Delivery ◊ Burial Assistance ◊ Child Care Assistance	◊ Child & Adult Protection Services ◊ Elder Home Visits ◊ Parents as Teachers ◊ Individual and Family Safety Planning ◊ Parenting Education ◊ Advocacy ◊ Life Skills Classes ◊ Healthy Relationship Classes	◊ Quarterly Health Fairs ◊ Annual Color Me Healthy Run/Walk ◊ Annual Marathon & Bike Race ◊ Step Challenge ◊ Field Days ◊ Annual Chili Cook off and Walk ◊ Nutritional Outreach ◊ 4th of July Celebration

Result: Comprehensive community-wide programs and services designed to support cultural resilience, strengthen community and promote wellness.

How We Served the Community

CNCFR offered many services to the community beyond assisting with integrating the Tribal Government entities that provide for the health, welfare, and safety of the local Tribal membership and community. These services include:

- Enhancement of existing program brochures for purposes of dissemination throughout the island and to ensure they are user friendly and accurate.
- Development of personnel recruitment and onboarding policies and procedures and accompanying New Personnel Welcome & Orientation slide deck to assist with onboarding.
- Addition of the onboarding training to the Canvas Learning Management System.
- Development of a Personal Sovereignty Statement for use in the program's mandatory reporting training, when meeting with and sharing with the community at large, and during personnel onboarding.
- Development of a legacy plan to ensure the long-term viability of the TKI service model and the wellbeing of the community.

The city of St. Paul is the sole settlement of Saint Paul Island in the Pribilof Islands, a small island group in the Bering Sea off the west coast of Alaska. St. Paul is a remote, rural, Alaska Native village with a population of less than 600 but is the largest Aleut community in the United States.

TKI's Work With CNCFR

The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island have been revising their child and family serving programs since the year 2000. In late 2000, St. Paul's Tribal Council (Council) began to realize they needed to take a more active role in the lives of their members health and wellness to stem the flow of children into the foster care system. In 2011, the Council informed the nonprofit corporation Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc. (APIAI), the federally recognized tribal organization of the Aleut people in Alaska, that it would be reassuming the Tribes role in self-governing the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) program.

Since that time, a lot of effort went into developing a holistic approach to healing and wellness through updating the Tribal Children's Code, creation of policies and procedures for working with families who needed to have children placed in out of home care, as well as creating a Tribal Court Bench guide. This development helped numerous families be reunited and get the preventative and reunification services.

To support the work of the Tribe and the continued development of TKI, the CNCFR project focused on:

- Preparing information on the TKI's model for dissemination throughout the island to generate interest and curiosity.
- Identifying and developing a personnel system and onboarding process to support the development of a culturally informed staff who are aware of the importance of cultural humility, understand Tribal traditions and values, and recognize how the values and traditions intersect their work within the Tribal child welfare system.
- Engaging the community in embracing and accepting responsibility for individual sovereignty to support healthy children and families. The notion of individual sovereignty was put to use here, though not as you might find in Anglo-American discussions of individual sovereignty. Instead, the concept is deployed a correction to the colonization and enslavement of the people of St. Paul Island; individual sovereignty is about taking ownership of one's self and life so as to contribute to the flourishing of the community.

THE CENTER'S APPROACH TO EVALUATION

Planning and implementing evaluations involved a collaborative and participatory process governed by the Tribal projects, their participants, and communities, with support from the Center team. This included developing culturally grounded and Tribally driven research questions, methodologies, and instruments. Evaluation work was grounded in Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) and sought to honor Indigenous ways of communication, incorporate cultural values, and integrate traditional knowledge gathering passed down through generations. To this end, the project team engaged with community members; sought the wisdom of Elders; participated in the oral tradition, storytelling, and ceremonies; and committed to keeping community values and context at the center of the work.

Evaluation Process/Steps

The planning of the evaluation of TKI was a collaborative and participatory process governed by the TKI team and facilitated by the Center, with the support of an Indigenous evaluation consultant. Collaboration for the evaluation between the TKI team and the Center began with an evaluability assessment in May 2019.

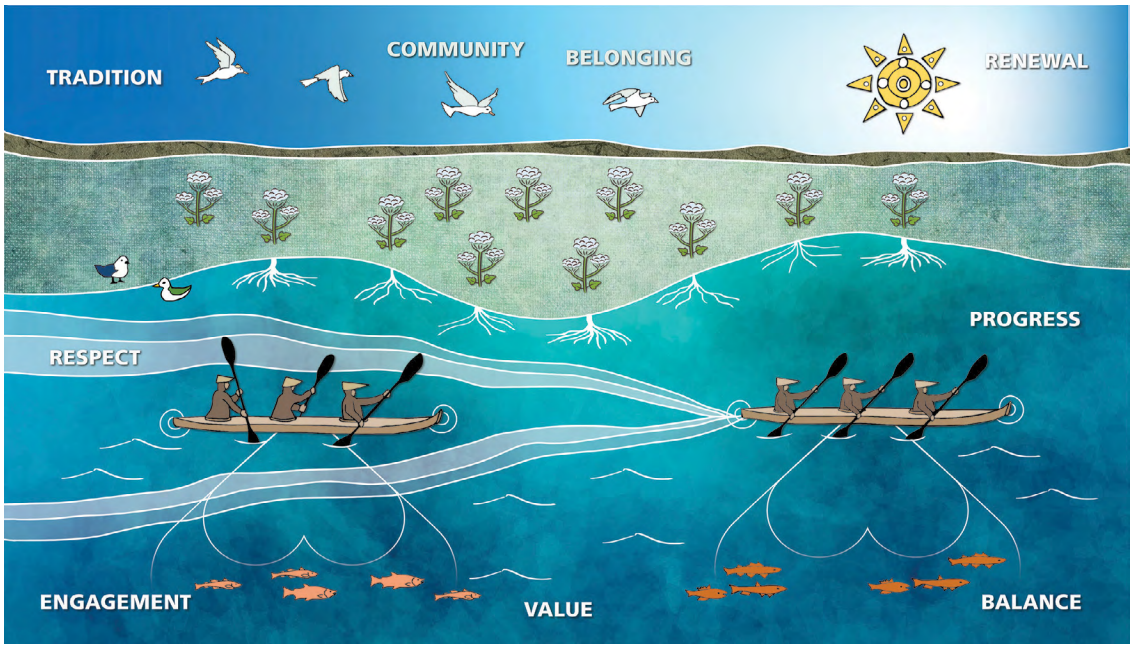
Meetings between the Center and the TKI team were grounded in the principles of IWOK to honor Unangan ways of communication, culture, and knowledge passed down through generations. The TKI team and the Center collaborated to define the goals of their partnership and activities to support those goals to support TKI's refinement of its service model. The Center team again visited TKI's Anchorage office in August 2019 to collaboratively develop a workplan. The process of developing the work plan was initiated through the creation of a Pathway to Change, which is a process to develop an Indigenous impact or logic model for achieving program outcomes. Upon completion and approval of the work plan, weekly meetings facilitated fully defining each objective and related activities until the project's

workplan was complete. The workplan described TKI activities and goals for child maltreatment prevention in depth and laid out central tasks of the collaboration between the TKI team and the Center.

Evaluation planning began after the workplan was finalized. The implementation and outcome evaluation questions were crafted over months of bi-directional learning, listening, and planning between the entire TKI team and the Center team. After the approval of the workplan in early 2020, the Center team began planning an in-person site visit to further discuss the evaluation plan, but quickly had to pivot to a virtual site visit after the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown travel to the island and the Tribal staff were sent home to work remotely, so meeting with the Anchorage staff was also not an option. One of the critical pieces of the virtual site visit was the kick-off of a creative group activity called Mind Mapping. The process of Mind Mapping is "to draw out" implicit knowledge about a particular topic by tapping into various kinds of knowledge, both "emotional" and "logical."

SEA OF CHANGE: STORY OF THE MIND MAP

The individuals paddling in the Baidarka demonstrate the importance of working together. When paddlers are not paddling in unison, as shown by the left Baidarka, the journey is more strenuous and frustrating. However, when the struggling paddler has someone modeling in the front and someone supporting them from behind, we move to the second Baidarka, as shown on the right, with everyone paddling together. The wake of this Baidarka serves as a guide for those behind it, leading the way.



The sun symbolizes what the paddlers are traveling toward: light, warmth, energy, love, and life. The poochkis and their roots symbolize the culture, traditions, history, and way of life for people on the island. What is beneath the surface is responsible for all that blooms and flourishes on the bountiful island. This is also represented in the reflections of the hearts that are beneath the paddlers, to remind us that the love and spirit that guides our work, even if not always visible, is always there.

Because of the TKI team's interest in and valuing of artistic vision and expression, Mind Mapping was an effective tool that aligned with the values of this group while supporting the goal of establishing a shared vision for TKI to inform the priorities of the evaluation.

What We Learned

The evaluation was crafted to elevate the voices of the community, just as the program supports and uplifts children and families to help their spirits soar. The evaluation planning created an opportunity to gather respected community service providers and leaders and work towards demonstrating program success with rigor while coming together for the welfare of children. The work reverberated beyond the St. Paul Island community, deeply touching the hearts and minds of the Center team. For members of the immediate and greater St. Paul community that participated in this evaluation, the services provided by TKI are an invaluable aspect of health and wellness. Members of the TKI team and the larger community remain hopeful about the healing that can occur through the revitalization of traditional knowledge, values, and ways and its intersection with modern tools such as parenting skills and education and trauma-informed behavioral health services.

The TKI team took on the evaluation knowing it would be a challenge. The evaluation occurred under difficult conditions, and the pandemic added an exponential degree of difficulty. But a powerful lesson emerged about the level of distrust among families towards evaluation. Families need time—*years*—to build trust with TKI staff as they navigate the ups and downs of their lives and community. Evaluation may also continue to leverage the program's long-lasting ties with the families who have been touched by the TKI team and their services. That is, the TKI team may incorporate the healing journey questions into their ongoing meetings with customers and use these to highlight or uncover

progress towards healing. The TKI team is also currently working to expand their SAFE data system, established as part of the Tribe's Title IV-E reporting requirements, which they use to capture needs and service receipt by families. The refinement of this data system aims to streamline communication across staff on-island and in Anchorage and will inform decision-making to help customers and families reach their personal goals.

In collaboration with TKI staff, several lessons learned emerged from the story of the evaluation that could help TKI further improve its services and make progress towards achieving its long-term vision for the community. Following are those lessons:

1. Be intentional about the array of services offered.
2. Incorporating a combination of traditional and modern healing approaches is critical to successful services.
3. As the COVID-19 pandemic allows, re-engaging with the community in-person should be a main priority as a preventative measure.
4. Within the TKI team, continue to build open, honest (non-punitive) communication.

Acknowledgements

The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (CNCFR) includes staff from JBS International, Inc. (JBS), the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI), Mathematica, and L&M Policy Research (L&M). The Center partnered with five project sites to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention or intervention programs for AI/AN children and families. This document summarizes the Evaluation Report, which was the work of:

Txin Kaanguŝ Initiative, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

Charlene Naulty

Sheridan DesGranges

Judge David Avraham Voluck

Terri Coletta

Tes Copeland

Erika Naulty

Aubrey Wegeleben

CNCFR Principal Writers

Kathleen Feeney, Mathematica

Joe Walker, JBS

Sonja Ulrich, JBS

Matt Burstein, JBS

CNCFR Contributors

Roseana Bess, Mathematica

Jeremy Braithwaite, TLPI

Charlotte Cabili, Mathematica

Priscilla Day, Consultant

Emily Fisher, JBS

Brian Jones, JBS

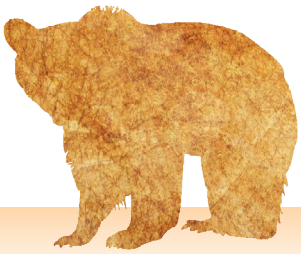
Robert Lindecamp, Children's Bureau

Paulette Running Wolf, Consultant

Erin Sandor, JBS

Elizabeth Weigensberg, Mathematica

Johnny Willing, Mathematica



Resources

The following products about the program were developed through the Center/TKI partnership:

- TKI Implementation Guide
- TKI Program Manual
- TKI Evaluation Report
- TKI Personnel Recruitment and Onboarding Policy & Procedures
- TKI Training for New Personnel

Yéil Koowú Shaawát

Evaluation Brief

Originally delivered within the Tlingit and Haida Tribal Family and Youth Services Department (TFYS), based in Juneau, Alaska, the Yéil Koowú Shaawát (YKS) curriculum is a family-focused, culturally based counseling and treatment model for Native women in Southeast Alaska. The YKS curriculum was delivered as a women's group that addresses issues of domestic violence, child maltreatment exposure, unresolved grief, and intergenerational trauma—one of the root causes of child maltreatment. The curriculum integrates Western therapies with traditional Native American spiritual healing practices and Southeast traditional Tribal teachings and values. Group meetings make use of talking circles, the medicine wheel, smudging, dipping, sweat lodges, and various group exercises.

The collaborative evaluation of the YKS program, one of five projects that partnered with the Center, found evidence that the curriculum:

- Strengthens cultural identity and restores women's Haa Shuká.[1]
- Promotes resilience and healing of intergenerational and historical trauma.
- Contributes to the acquisition of healthy parenting skills and behaviors.

In addition, the partnership revealed insightful lessons about how to conduct culturally congruent, respectful, and mutually valuable evaluations with Tribal communities.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Children's Bureau (CB) funded the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (the Center) to gather and disseminate information about Tribally relevant practice models, interventions, and services that contribute substantively to child maltreatment prevention efforts and family resilience developed by and for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations. The Center partnered with five project sites for four years (2019–2022) to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention/intervention programs for AI/AN children and families. This brief summarizes lessons and findings from the project-driven evaluation conducted with TFYS in support of building evidence for Tribally led child welfare initiatives.

Portrait of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát Program

The YKS curriculum was developed over the past two decades by staff in TFYS at the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. Originally known as the Native Women Counseling and Treatment Services Initiative, the curriculum was renamed Yéil Koowú Shaawát, which translates to "Raven Tail Woman."

1 Haa Shuká translated literally means, "our ancestors." It also captures the notion of "our ancestors, ourselves, and our future generations." Haa Shuká is a complex expression of one's relationship to a clan, relatives in other clans, the spirits of the land and animals, and spirits of ancestors who have walked on to the next world. It is an expression of connection and relationality to Tlingit ways of being and knowing. The meaning of Haa Shuká in the context of the curriculum extends to healing and living in a good Tlingit and Haida way within one's environment.

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

Tlingit & Haida

Children's Bureau

The Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida), through the TFYS and Community & Behavioral Services (CBS) departments, has been providing critical services to at-risk Native children and families in Southeast Alaska for over 40 years. The Central Council serves nearly 30,000 Tribal Citizens of the Tlingit and Haida Tribes, each of which has a distinct culture, language, and traditions. There are 14,000 Tlingit and Haida Tribal citizens that reside in Southeast Alaska, with the remainder residing in the lower 48 states. Over 25 percent of Tribal citizens (5,200) live in the Juneau area, with the remaining 75 percent (8,800 Tribal citizens) residing in villages throughout the region. Juneau is a community of about 32,000 people and, like most communities in Southeast Alaska, can only be reached by airplane or boat. Approximately 12 percent of the population is AI/AN.

The curriculum includes three phases completed over the course of one year. Each phase consists of 12–14 weekly lessons. The group meets for approximately three hours at times convenient to the participants, usually in the late afternoon and early evening. All phases provide participants with education and support around issues of childhood trauma, victimization and revictimization, and healing from these past traumas. The issues of alcoholism, addiction, and domestic violence are interwoven throughout the phases because they are pertinent intergenerational issues.

- **Phase I** addresses the building blocks of communication (including expression, discussion, and negotiation skills), conflict resolution, anger management, and problem-solving skills.
- **Phase II** focuses on family of origin issues and past/present relationships.
- **Phase III** uses a Sexual Abuse Talking Circle and deals with post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociation, and historical and intergenerational trauma.

THE CENTER'S APPROACH TO EVALUATION

Planning and implementing evaluations involved a collaborative and participatory process governed by the Tribal projects, their participants, and communities, with support from the Center team. This included developing culturally grounded and Tribally driven research questions, methodologies, and instruments. Evaluation work was grounded in Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) and sought to honor Indigenous ways of communication, incorporate cultural values, and integrate traditional knowledge gathering passed down through generations. To this end, the project team engaged with community members; sought the wisdom of Elders; participated in the oral tradition, storytelling, and ceremonies; and committed to keeping community values and context at the center of the work.

Like many Tribally driven approaches to intervening on child maltreatment, YKS takes a strength-based approach to healing, which emphasizes the importance of cultural resiliencies and protective factors. Such protective factors often center on affirming Native identity through connecting with locally distinct Native cosmologies and spiritual traditions (which include, among other things, connecting with traditional food-ways, kinship circles, the oral tradition, song, dance, Native language, and traditional healers). A fundamental aspect of this curriculum is healing trauma and thus intervening upon and preventing child maltreatment through a reclamation of Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural identity, and peer/kinship support systems.

TFYS staff delivered the curriculum with the support and partnership of group alumni, who are knowledgeable about the cultural values of Southeast Tribes and possess in-depth understanding of Alaska Native families and life, intergenerational trauma, alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence, abuse, community response, and the importance of the delivery of social services.

Story of the Evaluation

A team led by TFYS staff, working in partnership with the Center, documented and evaluated the YKS curriculum, with a plan to evaluate implementation, outcome, and cost components. To support the evaluation, TFYS staff and the Center team worked collaboratively to identify opportunities to collect and gather information needed to understand women's progress in their healing journeys (outcomes), how the curriculum works (implementation), and the level of effort to deliver the curriculum (cost).

RIBBON CEREMONY

During a graduation event for program participants, the Center team was invited on stage to take part in a Ribbon Ceremony acknowledging the growing trust and relationship between the Center team and women's group in a sacred circle of trust, furthering an atmosphere of sharing and safety.

Working together, the TFYS and CNCFR teams designed an evaluation practice that balances numerous demands by weaving the best parts of Western-style evaluation, IWOK, and community-based participatory research together into a framework that enabled us to assist project staff, their Tribal participants, and community members to document processes, frame outcomes, and make sense of findings—creating the conditions that allowed for effectively telling their story and sharing it with others as appropriate.

The evaluation began with processes to establish a foundational partnership with the YKS team, conduct readiness and evaluability assessment, and develop research questions. As part of this process, we sought to better understand and assess the evaluability of the program by using a guided storytelling tool that was developed in coordination with the Center's IWOK workgroup, which started by simply asking our new partners to tell us about their community and the story of their program during an initial onsite visit with the program that also led to a teaming agreement. The Center team returned for an onsite visit to work with the community on completing the process of the Pathway to Change which serves as an Indigenous approach to creating logic models that are relevant to Tribal communities. This tool created a foundation for developing the work plan.

The Center team listened carefully and engaged in a meaningful discussion about the evaluation through a lens of Indigenous empowerment and expressed the commitment to see the interaction as an opportunity to tell their story of the program. To guide this process, the team used a community-driven evaluation planning tool[2] created in partnership with the Center team and the Center's IWOK workgroup. The tool helped foster important dialogue about how to tell the story of effectiveness using a Tribally driven participatory evaluation framework.

To inform the development of research questions grounded by the TFYS community that also embodied the curriculum's outcomes of interest, its long-term goals, and the traditional values of the Tlingit and Haida Tribe, the Center engaged the TFYS and women's group members in multi-session mind mapping activities. The mind mapping process culminated in a visual presentation of the curriculum's key values, theories of change, and outcomes of interest, and most importantly, established the cultural metaphor of restoring Haa Shuká that became the backbone of the evaluation and its research questions.

2 The tool can be accessed in the full Evaluation Report.

Information gathering sources for the evaluation components were:

IMPLEMENTATION SOURCES	WOMEN'S HEALING SOURCES	COST SOURCES
Attendance logs	Talking circles following each phase of the curriculum	Cost (time) log journal
Facilitator fidelity logs	Participant personal reflections in one of three formats (letter to self, photos, visual narrative)	Cost (time) log debrief discussion
Weekly sticky note polls	Meaning-making interviews with participants following the creation of personal reflections	
Facilitator interviews		
Talking circles		

Participants were informed about the evaluation, their rights as participants, and the steps of the information gathering process. The Personal Reflections activity gave participants the choice of medium in describing who they were at the time and who they hoped to be when they graduate or finish the curriculum. This was a popular activity that gave participants the opportunity to demonstrate their healing journey along with their hopes, fears, dreams, and intentions for themselves, their children, and family.

How We Served the Community

Throughout the partnership, the Center worked intentionally with the community and program leaders, co-creating tools and resources to document their program's model and successes so that other AI/AN child welfare organizations could adapt and implement in their own Tribal settings. The lead facilitator teamed with the Center to closely examine the existing curriculum, refine materials, create guides for each lesson, and more fully develop the YKS curriculum. This work led to a four-volume facilitator's guide for use by others interested in implementing the program, which was published on the Center website along with a supporting implementation guide and the evaluation report. Printed copies of these products were provided to the YKS program.

One of the goals of the project was to support the community in creating lasting materials for the program to sustain the project's legacy for many years to come. The Center collaborated with the program to develop a legacy plan and the project story video, designed to support the understanding of the program, its origin, and its history. The Center supported the program in preparing materials for dissemination at conferences and other venues, including support to YKS staff with travel, developing materials, and implementing their presentation at the 2023 National Indian Child Welfare Association Conference (NICWA).

As the partnership period drew to a close, the Center supported the YKS team with planning and preparing to implement a new cohort of the women's group, following the original leader's retirement. The Center team contracted with the original leader to provide coaching support to the project site as they worked to use the new materials developed as a guide in implementing the group and provided

Forms of Information Gathering

concrete resources to help secure meeting space, online access to sessions through Zoom, and food and office supplies.

What We Learned

To tell this story, we first must make an important note about the term "outcomes," which suggests a static result, effect, or product. That is not how we understand or employ this term in the context of this report. These are the sacred healing stories of women, gathered with the utmost intention to honor the lived experience, wisdom, and healing power they contain. Moreover, the effects of the group are not time-bound or individualized because the program helps heal the community by using the community's culture and traditions to heal these women and their families.

Across all sources we found evidence that the Yéil Koowú Shaawát curriculum:

- **Strengthens cultural identity and restores women's Haa Shuká**

  Specifically, women reported improved emotional self-awareness, self-efficacy, coping skills, and communication skills. They experienced heightened empathy and an increased ability to trust and forgive themselves and others. They experienced healing through strengthened cultural identity and connection to cultural values. As one participant shared:

  "I learned so much about myself, my family, and my culture. And it really had a profound effect on my life."

- **Promotes resilience and healing of intergenerational and historical trauma**

  Through an understanding of intergenerational and historic trauma women made new connections to their circumstances, contemporary traumas, histories, relationships, and futures. They found commonalities among themselves, ancestors, and other women through understanding their ancestors' experiences, both positive and negative. As one participant explained:

  "This is my second time participating in Yéil Koowú Shaawát. It has strengthened me. It has kept me alive and it's providing me with the knowledge and strength to break the generational cycles of abuse stemming from historical trauma."

- **Contributes to the acquisition of healthy parenting skills and behaviors**

  Like many Tribally driven approaches to preventing and intervening upon child maltreatment, the YKS curriculum takes a strength-based approach to healing. The findings suggest the curriculum's emphasis on healing trauma through the reclamation of IWOK, promotion of cultural identity and protective capacities, and peer kinship support systems, coupled with both Western and Native healing modalities, strongly correlated with the acquisition of healthy parenting skills and behaviors. As one participant related:

  "I can pass on what I learned, show them how, so they can learn what not to do, any trouble or anything, stress, anything like that—how to cope with it a lot better, instead of lashing out in anger. I also think my daughter feels more relaxed too. I've been showing her what I've learned all this year and she's more comfortable with me now."

THE HEALING VILLAGE

The Healing Village was designed to be a community-based group supporting the process of validation and meaning-making from the gathered evaluation information. The group, composed of recent alumni of the Yéil Koowú Shaawát program, a local Tlingit Elder and knowledge bearer, program facilitators, and Center team members, met to review the preliminary findings, reflect on the language used to describe the journey of participants, and provide oversight in ensuring appropriate understanding of the information and accurate application of the findings to better understand the program and its impact on the community. Through facilitated Talking Circles held using an online platform, the Healing Village members engaged in reflection and storytelling in response to high-level summaries of program outcomes.

Women's group members who participated in evaluation processes felt listened to and were willing to participate in evaluation activities when data collection methods were developed based on their input. This process contributed to their receptivity to sharing personal, difficult accounts of trauma as well as their healing journeys. Participants' desire to engage in activities promoted critical thinking, self-exploration, and analysis based on personal reflections that provided a creative space that supported their healing journey. This suggests that involving participants in the development of data collection methods contributed to the depth of findings and overall success of the evaluation process.

> "[The Center team] really listened. From the very beginning, the very first talking circle . . . and what came out of that has everything to do with how we proceeded with gathering material and collecting data. For example, I remember a couple of different interviews where they [the women in the group] are specifically telling you, 'yeah, I'd like to do something like write or I'd like maybe to do it in a more creative artistic way, or maybe I would like to take photographs ' . . . . I think your willingness to be open and innovative like that led to some pretty spectacular [personal reflection] projects that we came up with."
>
> — Group Leader

Active listening along with practicing humility and co-creation was a vital collaborative strategy that aided in building trust and supported innovative approaches to develop evaluation plans, information-gathering methodologies and tools, and an analysis that understands meaning. This meant intentionally practicing humility and engaging in co-creating to facilitate trust-building among the Center team, facilitators, and participating women.

Additional recommendations for future evaluations include:

- Ensure that there would be sufficient time and flexibility built into the process to engage in a genuinely participatory approach.
- Promote IWOK and achieve the effective partnership required for elevating the cultural values of humility, reciprocity, and understanding and internalizing Tribal sites' history with research abuses and historic and ongoing trauma.
- Build relationships early, even before the planning phase, and anchor those efforts in respect, trust, and openness.
- Use consultants or staff members who understand IWOK, know how to incorporate it into research, and have worked with Tribal projects in the past. Be attentive to growing the capabilities of more junior or inexperienced staff.
- Ensure that readiness assessments tell a complete and detailed story about where projects are and what they need to advance.

Despite difficult challenges and realities, shining a light on stories of success and opportunities for growth in a culturally grounded way is empowering for communities. Using an evaluative approach that honors IWOK principles and reflects the community's needs and questions about the efficacy of the program helps ensure that the evaluation's results are processes and products that have a high level of utility for the community and provide an opportunity for the community to tell their program's story. Through active listening, trust building, authentic collaboration, and constant reflection, researchers and evaluators working with Tribes can build important relationships with their Indigenous community partners and, in return, be gifted with the stories of their programs and the people they serve.

Acknowledgements

The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (CNCFR) includes staff from JBS International, Inc. (JBS), the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI), Mathematica, and L&M Policy Research (L&M). The Center partnered with five project sites to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention or intervention programs for AI/AN children and families. This document summarizes the Evaluation Report, which was the work of:

Yéil Koowú Shaawát Program

Amalia Monreal, Curriculum Developer and Facilitator

Mary Rivera, Facilitator

Patricia Graham, Past Program Facilitator and Participant

Leona Santiago, Tribal Elder, Member of "Healing Village" Committee

CNCFR Principal Writers

Michael Cavanaugh, L&M

Sonja Ulrich, JBS

Matt Burstein, JBS

Priscilla Day, Consultant

CNCFR Contributors

Sonia Alves, Mathematica

Roseana Bess, Mathematica

Jeremy Braithwaite, TLPI

Charlotte Cabili, Mathematica

Brian Jones, JBS

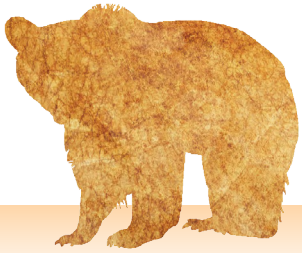
Robert Lindecamp, Children's Bureau

Erin Sandor, JBS

Joe Walker, JBS

Elizabeth Weigensberg, Mathematica

Johnny Willing, Mathematica



Resources

The following products about the program were developed through the Center/YKS partnership:

- Yéil Koowú Shaawát Implementation Guide
- Yéil Koowú Shaawát Facilitator's Guide
  - Introduction
  - Phase I: Anger, Stress, and Communication
  - Phase II: Personal and Family Development
  - Phase III: Sexual Abuse Talking Circle
- Yéil Koowú Shaawát Evaluation Report

Zuya Yuha O'mani

Evaluation Brief

The Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center (OLCJC), formerly known as Oglala Lakota Court Appointed Special Advocate (OLCASA), leads the *Zuya Yuha O'mani* Program, which focuses on supporting the healing of Lakota children who have experienced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. *Zuya Yuha O'mani* means "Walking Everywhere in Spiritual Strength/Defense of the Children." The program serves **Wakanyeja** (sacred little ones[1]) and their **Tiospaye** (extended family) in the nine districts of the Pine Ridge Reservation.

OLCJC was founded as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with the mission of protecting and advocating for the best interests of Lakota children who have experienced sexual and physical abuse while their cases were being adjudicated in the court system. Advocating on behalf of children who have been traumatized by abuse and supporting healing and wellness through tradition and culture are core to OLCJC services. OLCJC staff believe in the importance of combining the lessons from the historical past, cultural traditions, and contemporary methods of treatment to bring healing to the children and people of the community. Cultural teachings and ceremony are critical components of the program and are used to support children and families in healing and building cultural resilience to prevent future abuse. The role of the program in the lives of families and the community includes increasing awareness and education on the issues of child abuse, providing a holistic approach to supporting children who have experienced abuse or neglect, and serving as advocates for children. The program receives referrals from organizations and the Court, but families often seek out the OLCJC team for assistance on their own accord.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Children's Bureau (CB) funded the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (the Center) to gather and disseminate information about Tribally relevant practice models, interventions, and services that contribute substantively to child maltreatment prevention efforts and family resilience developed by and for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations. The Center partnered with five project sites for four years (2019–2022) to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention/intervention programs for AI/AN children and families. This brief summarizes lessons and findings from the project-driven evaluation conducted with OLCJC in support of building evidence for Tribally led child welfare initiatives.

About the Program

The *Zuya Yuha O'mani* Program uses lessons from the history of the Oglala Lakota people and contemporary methods combined with traditional customs, language, and ceremonies to provide comprehensive and holistic advocacy for every Wakanyeja and their Tiospaye. The program provides a range

1 For the Lakota people, children are sacred. "Children" or "sacred little ones" are common Western translations of Wakanyeja. The word is essentially two parts: **Wakan** (holy or sacred) and **yeja** (to mix one's blood to create the child). To be sacred is to be treated as a gift from spirit, as precious ones who are our future.

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

Oglala Lakota Children's Justice Center

Children's Bureau

of services—including forensic interviews, counseling, culturally appropriate case management and advocacy, and cultural teachings—that heal and protect children who have been traumatized by physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. The *Zuya Yuha O'mani* Program employs traditional Lakota customs, language, and ceremony to provide comprehensive and holistic advocacy for children. The goal is to create a better way of life for the Wakanyeja and **Tiwahe** (families) in crisis by helping them reclaim their heritage, identity, and self-esteem by emphasizing the development of cultural competence and identity to promote child and family well-being. The program's cultural teachings are an antidote to forced assimilation and failed efforts to extinguish Lakota culture, using the medicine of the Lakota culture to heal injuries from forced assimilation and ongoing manifestations of trauma. One community knowledge bearer described how the Pine Ridge Reservation has undergone a cultural renaissance in the past four decades, such that ceremony and culture have gained positive recognition and schools have incorporated Lakota traditions, such as beginning the day with a prayer and song. This revival has generated hope for the promising role of culture in prevention and healing.

At the core of the *Zuya Yuha O'mani* Program is the Lakota creation story and cosmology: In the beginning, the Creator gave the people assignments, rights, and ways for living on the land and with each other. People's primary responsibility was caring for the community, especially for the children and elders. The community and the prayers of the Lakota develop relationships beyond the traditional Western nuclear family, including extended family and bringing in other teachers, other helpers, and other caregivers, as the child's needs dictate. The Lakota people believe that, in the spirit world, children choose parents that they see as a resource for them to grow. When a family is gifted with a child, the family

is given the great responsibility of caring for them, helping the child to develop their special skills and blessings.

As an organization, OLCJC champions the 2007 Wakanyeja Na Tiwahe Ta Woope[2] (Child and Families Code of the Oglala Sioux Tribe/Lakota Nation, or "the Code").[3] In support of the Nation's distinctive identity, culture, and values, the Code defines Lakota kinship and interaction as well as using Lakota ways to care for and protect children. Part of OLCJC's current mission is to provide education on the Code to people who operate within federal, state, and Tribal child welfare jurisdictions, describing the Code's history, development, and components. This continued education promotes increased understanding and compliance with the Tribal Code and the Seven Traditional Laws, as the community faces turnover among officials. The Code is comprehensive and, like the Lakota Creation Story, provides guiding principles for the work of OLCJC. For example, children removed from the home are placed in accordance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and Tribal law—that is, placed in Indian homes and with all possible efforts made to reunify children with their

2 "**Woope** means 'law,' though it does not have the same connotations that the term 'law' has in the Anglo-American tradition; it is not 'just' Laws. It represents that Women come from Wo Ope and as such are responsible for carrying the laws of Creation within the Universe, the World, their Nation, and most importantly in their homes. Without woman, there could be no life. So, women are instructed to uphold the laws without gossip or favoritism, and men are instructed to honor and provide protection to the family through diligence in prayer. Thus, men provide and initiate ceremony for their loved ones for the rest of their lives as a responsibility" (Larry Swalley, via email, November 2, 2023).

3 As with many federally recognized Tribes, the Oglala Sioux Tribe has developed its own Tribal Court and law and code. Tribal codes help to legally maintain cultural practices and beliefs and "ensure the preservation of Tribal sovereignty and the right of Natives to be judged within their own systems, not subject to the biases and prejudices of Western thought" (Thurman, P.J. (1995). Native American Community Alcohol Prevention Research. In P.A. Langton (Ed.), *The Challenge of participatory research: Preventing alcohol-related problems in ethnic communities* (CSAP Cultural Competence Series 3). Rockville, MD: Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. 245-258.). As a part of law and code development, Tribes determine standards for rights based on beliefs and priorities, including rights of the individual and kin group. Research within Indigenous communities is improved when efforts are made to understand the nature and intent of Tribal codes.

families. The Code also provides guidance to the community with specific information on the traditional laws governing decisions affecting children (Oyate Ta Woope). The traditional laws are intended to support the retention of traditional practices, rooted in the history of the people, the language, and the belief in living harmoniously with the natural world. Working in alignment with Lakota values, the OLCJC team members use the Traditional Laws, as communicated in the Code, as the foundation of and guide for services provided.

Traditional Laws to Govern Decisions Affecting Children (Oyate Ta Woope)[4]

TRADITIONAL LAW	MEANING
Wocekiye "faithfulness"	To believe in and pray to Tunkasila, or Wakan Tanka (the Great Spirit), as the supreme being and power and as the creator of all that is. Wakan Tanka gave the people seven sacred ceremonies as means of cleansing themselves and seeking guidance and direction from the Great Spirit.
Wowacinksape "wisdom"	To be sound in mind and to acquire the knowledge necessary to make proper and effective decisions for the well-being of the people.
Wonagiksape "spirituality"	To be sound in spirit and to live according to the laws, direction, and guidance of Tunkasila.
Wowacintanka "fortitude"	To exercise self-control and discipline, and to have the strength of mind to endure pain and adversity.
Wowaunsila "generosity"	To look after the well-being of others, and to share one's knowledge and materials so that others may prosper.
Wawoyuonihan "respect"	To respect oneself and the rights, beliefs, and decisions of others.
Wowahokunkiye "guidance and counseling"	To advise, counsel, and guide others in the proper ways and beliefs of the people, especially the youth.

How We Served the Community

The CNCFR team provided programmatic support to OLCJC, which aimed to systematically document existing services and service delivery pathways. Functioning as a community-based entity, OLCJC addresses a spectrum of service needs in the community, providing both formal and informal services. Through the creation of practice maps, the CNCFR team aided the OLCJC team in developing visual aids showcasing the Lakol Wicohan (Lakota Way of Life) as well as outlining the workflow practices of OLCJC team members, which include intake, case management, and traditional service delivery. Collaborating closely with OLCJC partners, the team contributed to the formulation of a comprehensive program manual that delineates the operational aspects of the program. This manual is intended to serve as a resource for other Tribes, facilitating potential replication of the program in the future. To support further dissemination, the team worked in concert with the OLCJC leadership to develop a video of the story of the program to assist the community in sharing the message about their program and vision for change for the Lakota people.

4 Oglala Sioux Child and Family Code

Children and Families—A Glimpse Along the Path

At the center of the story of this evaluation are the experiences of the children, families, and caregivers that embarked upon the path of healing with the help and support of OLCJC. As the Center team sought advice from OLCJC's director on how best to frame our findings and the indicators of healing experienced by children and families during the evaluation, she expressed that they should be viewed with a strength-based lens and used the phrase "positive possibilities" to describe how she viewed positive change in children that have experienced unimaginable traumas. These positive possibilities are snapshots in time that highlight an ever-evolving journey toward healing.

Ultimately, four families participated in the evaluation interviews, for a total of six child interviews, two caretaker interviews, and two observations. Families with two children were provided the opportunity for the siblings to be interviewed together. The ages of the children at the time of interviews ranged between 7 and 16. All interviews were conducted over Zoom due to COVID-19 precautions and community constraints on contact at the time the information was gathered. Children were asked to discuss activities they enjoy, people they like to spend time with, and their feelings about Lakota teachings and ceremonies as well as their experiences with services provided by OLCJC team members. Caregivers were asked similar questions about their experiences with OLCJC services.

> [The children] were more antsy and I think Zoom had a lot to do with it, too, because it was during COVID and Pine Ridge was shut down. We had no gatherings. We weren't allowed to be in-person. Families didn't even want us to come in the homes and do the interview . . . . I think Zoom affected it a lot.
>
> — OLCJC Interviewer

All of the children that participated in the evaluation experienced severe trauma, including emotional, spiritual, sexual, and physical abuse. Children were exposed to violence, including the murder of a parent by the other parent in one case; experienced neglect that was associated with parental substance use issues and poverty; and had been traumatized by being removed from their homes and parents. Children were most often referred to the program by local courts and associated victim services and child protection agencies.

Despite very difficult circumstances and experiences, the children demonstrated **Wowacintanka** (fortitude) as they showed great strength of mind, body, and spirit in enduring great pain and adversity. Children reported they were involved in positive developmental activities, including sports, recreational outdoor activities (e.g., swimming, sledding), and video games. Similarly, caregivers sought to keep the children active in their educational work and sports. When children had free time, they played and connected with extended family and animals they cherished. One child reported making bracelets for friends. While seemingly mundane, connecting with a friend or engaging in educational

THE CENTER'S APPROACH TO EVALUATION

Planning and implementing evaluations involved a collaborative and participatory process governed by the Tribal projects, their participants, and communities, with support from the Center team. This included developing culturally grounded and Tribally driven research questions, methodologies, and instruments. Evaluation work was grounded in Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) and sought to honor Indigenous ways of communication, incorporate cultural values, and integrate traditional knowledge gathering passed down through generations. To this end, the project team engaged with community members; sought the wisdom of Elders; participated in the oral tradition, storytelling, and ceremonies; and committed to keeping community values and context at the center of the work.

or physical pursuits embodies Lakota traditions and demonstrates important healing after deep traumas. They show the presence of **Wowacinksape** (wisdom) and **Wowaunsila** (generosity) as they venture onto the path of healing. After working with a child and family, the presence of positive possibilities as termed by the OLCJC Executive Director reflect children's ability to heal and she sees Lakota virtues in those possibilities:

> *I think it's like nurturance, being able to nurture their education. They're giving back, giving back, modeling those teachings . . . and then the virtues, like bravery, fortitude, wisdom, generosity.*

OLCJC views these attributes in the emergence of children's interest in participating in everyday activities as strong indicators that exposure to the program and its focus on ceremony and Lakota tradition is working to heal acute and intergenerational wounds.

Children living their traditions and having the self-esteem to persist despite deep trauma exemplifies the promise of the program; going to school, engaging in kinship, being physically active, and showing interest in connecting to one's identity and community are powerful examples of positive change. The lead Case Manager/Cultural Provider, shared what he looks for in healing:

> *So, when you see them and they look like, or they speak as if they have a sense of self-esteem, that's a really good, good thing.*

Moreover, child protective factors like cultural teachings emerged as important themes in the interviews with children after engaging with program services. Children learned the importance of **Wonagiksape** (spirituality) and the power of Lakota tradition in healing from trauma. Children enjoyed learning about their Lakota identity and traditions through song and ceremony. Some of the children interviewed had been in the process of grieving and healing for several years, while others had more recent experiences. For those that experienced trauma more recently, the COVID restrictions for OLCJC prevented the team from offering the ceremonies in the manner previously done.

Even so, children and families were exposed to some Lakota ceremony and song, and caregivers helped extend teachings about the Lakota ways at home. In talking about their children's exposure to Lakota lifeways, one caregiver noted that due to having learned:

> *Lakota teachings [the children] know how to smudge, and the youngest is in a half emergent program. [The OLCJC Director] introduced them to a sweat lodge, they're interested, and they want to do it, COVID has just stopped it.*

While the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted OLCJC's capacity to provide more encompassing in person exposure to language, culture, song, and ceremony, even in a limited capacity it resonated with children and caretakers. One child exemplifies this important point and the promise of culture as healing medicine when speaking about their newfound ethnic pride and self-esteem, "I learned to love being Indigenous, like to love that part."

While the community was in isolation, OLCJC provided cultural teachings by other means, including gifting to the children and families and providing online opportunities for interaction. Ceremonies held virtually or at a distance still had positive effects; one caregiver shared that what they appreciated was:

> *the whole ceremony; I loved the singing, the dancing, the words said, the wisdom—there was so much wisdom in that hour or two or whatever it was. The things he said it was really good. I really liked it and I talked about it a lot.*

To keep families connected during the pandemic the OLCJC team also engaged in other activities through Zoom, including offering an option for online yoga classes—which like Lakota traditions seeks to foster the connection between mind, body, and spirit for

children. Children and caregivers spoke highly of their experiences doing yoga online and the benefits of being exposed to yoga, including one child who said, "Yoga makes me feel good," and another child who said, "Yoga helped me release energy." One caregiver said the following of the yoga sessions:

> *I love the yoga sessions. They think it is the funniest thing—I would have never thought that about them. [The kids] love it; they laugh and giggle and when it's over we turn the zoom off they have to do it themselves and they giggle . . . . I was surprised. I didn't think they were going to like it.*

When the children were asked about changes in themselves since they started working with the OLCJC team, they often described the things they liked to do and the people they are connected to. For example, one child said, "I talk more with my caregiver." Children reported they were optimistic, happy, and enjoyed their grandparents' cooking—even just laughing with friends. The children consistently reported positive aspects of their life, including those focused on relationships with family, siblings, and animals.

Caregivers echoed the statements of the children, adding that as the children healed, they were more willing and better able to connect with friends and relatives as well. Caregivers described activities that children engaged in, which primarily centered around family being together and doing chores or work together as a family. They also described positive experiences with the children when they have friends over and when they can have one-on-one conversations. Caregiver responses, further demonstrate the promise of the program as kids learn and exemplify Lakota values like **Wawoyuonihan** (respect) by engaging in kinship and learning and acting upon their responsibilities within the context of their families and community. In speaking about the impact of the program on the siblings she cares for, one caregiver said, that the:

> *one thing it did for the boys is [the OLCJC staff] coming into their life when their dad was taken from them and their mom was taken from then and there wasn't just a lot of happy going on in their life because they were having to talk to FBI Agents, trauma counselors, and they were having to adjust to a new home. OLCJC staff had called me one day and she asked do the boys need backpacks, and I was like sure. She said bring them in and I said OK and took them in. She just made them feel like kids again. At that time, she made me realize that yeah these are kids, not that I didn't know we were just so like this with FBI trauma counselors, that I think we were slipping away from making sure they were ok. OLCJC staff treated them like they were normal little kids coming in to get backpacks.*

Caregivers talked about the kind nature of the staff and what they bring to the community and program. Arlana and the program provide **Wawahokunkiye** (guidance and counseling) to children and families in need; she shows them through her actions proper Lakota ways and beliefs. They describe her as being patient, supportive and caring. The OLCJC Director provides a consistent reminder for caregivers to find patience in the children they care for, reminding the caregivers that they are working children who, at times, are facing overwhelming and adult situations like court appearances and law enforcement involvement. One caregiver said the following about the Director's approach:

> *Pay attention to her and her teachings because she has a different way of teaching, she has a conversational way of teaching. That's important: she puts people at ease, she puts me at ease. She was the first person I turned to during the tragedy without even a thought process, and I don't really trust anybody. I trust her and I trust what she tells me. I've had over 30 years of exposure with her and kids.*

What We Learned

In our many site visits, calls, and project gatherings, we learned about OLCJC, its services, and what it means to the community. We had countless informal opportunities to hear stories and engage with Elders and staff about the history of the program and its impact on children, families, and the community. We want to highlight some of these stories here, as an illustration of the program's legacy and standing in the community and to show how they act as shepherds along the Red Road for intergenerational healing. This kind of healing takes time, more time than an evaluation could encapsulate; OLCJC's work has stood the test of time and it is best demonstrated through their words and the words of their staff and the Elders that have shaped the program over the years.

> In our culture, we don't close cases, we see them through. In two weeks, I will tie the eagle feather for someone I work with, and I will in effect become her father. Child protection services won't be involved anymore. But I will be.
>
> — Lead Case Manager/Cultural Provider

As a nonprofit organization, OLCJC is not contracted by federal, state, or Tribal government; its mission of advocating for children is distinct and offers the program autonomy in responding to the needs of traumatized children. For example, local social service agency staff experience turnover, Tribal administrations transition, partners show reluctance to collaborate, and community circumstances otherwise evolve. Yet, OLCJC staff are in some ways the "glue" in the community and forge relationships with cultural competency, trust, and respect. For example, one family said that OLCJC staff had continued to work with them through eight different case workers from the child welfare system. OLCJC works in Lakota ways, establishing a relational bond through ceremony that creates an ongoing responsibility. Once a case is opened, OLCJC supports the child and non-offending family members throughout their lives as needed. Often, the relationship between OLCJC staff and families evolves from a professional relationship into a personal relationship, and this seals a lifetime connection.

An Elder and active board member who has had a deep connection to the program since its inception, visited with the CNCFR team during a recent trip to Pine Ridge. We were fortunate enough to enjoy a meal together and spent several hours together sharing stories about the program, his family, his history, and the power of ceremony and Lakota traditions. He said the following about the program:

> *I'm really glad that we have a place [like OLCJC] that provides for the children, looks out for children, and watches over them. And I think we need about 20 of these places on the reservation, 20 of these programs on the reservation, but we've only got this one. I try to provide at least what I can to assist in the development. It's really been a good journey.*

The Elder shared the vision for the program and how the Cultural Provider carries out that vision, helping to contribute to a child's journey of healing through ceremony:

> *I really like [the Cultural Provider] being there because [he] knows how do to the ceremonies. That's kind of what we envisioned about this program is the way that a person can assist the family through ceremony . . . . It's something you can feel it. You go into different places like the sweat lodge and you go there to honor the people who were . . . . Especially whenever they call on the spirits in these calling songs, they come in and assist you and help you out with whatever issue that you have.*

We, the CNCFR team, hoped to hear more healing stories directly from children and families; to some extent we did. However, what we gathered formally and within the evaluation period is a mere slice of the deep work that OLCJC does to sustain and improve the fabric of the community. The program, like Lakota cosmology, honors the interconnection of all things; it does not stop when leadership leaves the OLCJC office at the end of the day. It is a way of life, not a job. Center staff witnessed this type of attention to relationality and interconnectedness during our visits in person and virtually. We saw one OLCJC staff get up early and provide education to a school on the creation story, and another staff spending a long weekend out in the fields harvesting medicine for ceremonies meant to heal children and families. We heard about staff intervening among youth involved in an altercation, using Lakota ways to ease tensions and bring parents and children together in a loving way. We witnessed a Lakota naming ceremony; another sacred ceremony and tradition being revitalized by the OLCJC leadership. These are the intangible, sometimes informal experiences that demonstrate the effectiveness of the OLCJC's program. It's an effectiveness beyond intervening upon child maltreatment. It's the effectiveness of being role models to the community, of being advocates, champions, and caretakers of Lakota lifeways for the community. The positive effect ripples out to others, and moment by moment, experience by experience, OLCJC staff are working to decolonize and empower children, families, and the community. It is the embodiment of resilience, of showing up for one's community despite difficult circumstances, histories, and experiences.

Commitment of the Program Leadership

OLCJC creates connection or as the Director stated, "positive possibilities." The program creates opportunities for people to connect to their ways and addresses trauma in a way that is congruent with their traditions. Within the context of seemingly endless challenges, showing children and families a path forward provides hope, and their goal remains a steadfast commitment to creating a thriving community by using Lakota teachings to get upstream of trauma. Arlana supported this premise when she said:

> *We don't want to have to keep being resilient. We want to be thriving. We want to be thriving. We hope to teach and provide those teachings and stableness to the child victims that you don't carry that abuse with you. That abuse does not define who you are . . . . This is who you are. And we're helping that by yes, this healing, from the point of trauma throughout healing. We're also helping this by having these discoveries of us people as who we are . . . to provide that nurturing, safe environment and bring you to this healing so you don't have to go through some of those things that we went through. And so, that's how we're doing it.*

Acknowledgements

The Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (CNCFR) includes staff from JBS International, Inc. (JBS), the Tribal Law and Policy Institute (TLPI), Mathematica, and L&M Policy Research (L&M). The Center partnered with five project sites to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention or intervention programs for AI/AN children and families. This document summarizes the Evaluation Report, which was the work of:

Zuya Yuha O'mani Program

Arlana Bettelyoun, OLCJC

Lawrence Swalley, OLCJC

Bobbi Amiotte, OLCJC

Richard Iron Cloud, Elder and Cultural Expert

CNCFR Principal Writers

Michael Cavanaugh, L&M Policy Research

Sonja Ulrich, JBS

Matt Burstein, JBS

Charlotte Cabili, Mathematica

CNCFR Contributors

Priscilla Day, Consultant

AJ Ernst, JBS

Brian Jones, JBS

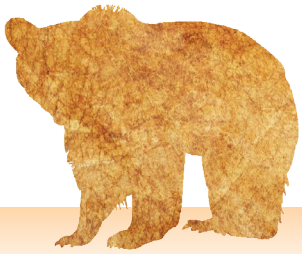
Robert Lindecamp, Children's Bureau

Arleen Rodriguez-Jacoby, Children's Bureau

Erin Sandor, JBS

Pamela Jumper Thurman, Consultant

Joe Walker, JBS



Resources

The following products about the program were developed through the Center/OLCJC partnership:

- The *Zuya Yuha O'mani* Program Implementation Guide
- The *Zuya Yuha O'mani* Program Manual
- The *Zuya Yuha O'mani* Program Evaluation Report

My Two Aunties

Evaluation Brief

About the My Two Aunties Program, Indian Health Council, and Community

The goal of the My Two Aunties (M2A) program is to prevent and intervene upon child maltreatment by restoring cultural family life skills and destigmatizing and decolonizing social services. M2A positions social workers in the role of community helpers, referred to as "Aunties." Modeled on the traditional role of aunties in the rearing and teaching of children; aunties remind their families, especially their sibling's children, of the proper way to live a good life in balance and provide healing guidance when trauma occurs. They provide mentoring and coaching to build family strengths and an enduring legacy that honors ancestral teachings of what it means to be family. Their stories, passed on and gifted from Elders, are the medicines that teach listeners to be better people, families, and communities. The Aunties help families navigate services, provide culturally driven case management, share cultural teachings, and conduct community outreach.

The M2A program is housed within the Tribal Family Services (TFS) department at the Indian Health Council (IHC). The IHC is a healthcare consortium of nine federally recognized Tribes located in an 1,800-square mile service area in the northern part of San Diego County, California. It is located on the traditional homelands of the Rincon Band of Luiseño Indians, also known as the Payomkawichum people, in Valley Center, which encompasses a 5,000-acre reservation. In addition to TFS, the IHC includes six other departments: medical, dental, pharmacy, behavioral health services, public health programs, and health promotion services.

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Children's Bureau (CB) funded the Center for Native Child and Family Resilience (the Center) to gather and disseminate information about Tribally relevant practice models, interventions, and services that contribute substantively to child maltreatment prevention efforts and family resilience developed by and for American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations. The Center partnered with five project sites for four years (2019–2022) to design or refine, implement, and evaluate their child maltreatment prevention/intervention programs for AI/AN children and families. This brief summarizes lessons and findings from the project-driven evaluation conducted with M2A in support of building evidence for Tribally led child welfare initiatives.

M2A Program Components

1. Tailored service navigation and holistic and culturally driven case management

With support from other IHC staff, the Aunties facilitate tailored service navigation and holistic, culturally driven case management to support and strengthen families, enhance their ability to

Center for Native Child and Family Resilience

My Two Aunties

Children's Bureau

access existing services and promote positive interactions among family members. Aunties seek to create a safer environment for children, recognizing that the family and children may not be able to reach out for access to services, orchestrate their own system of care, or understand the sense of urgency and need for solutions. The program takes a "no wrong door" approach to providing services; children and families are connected to an array of holistic, culturally grounded programs and services.

2. Cultural teachings and family ways within the M2A Cultural Family Life Skills Discussion Guide and Family Spirit curriculum

The M2A model shines a light on the fundamental importance of local ways of knowing in preventing, healing, and intervening upon child maltreatment. A foundation of the M2A program is storytelling and the oral tradition, which carry the weight of wisdom passed on through countless generations.

M2A Cultural Family Life Skills Discussion Guide

The M2A Cultural Family Life Skills Discussion Guide and the associated M2A Facilitator's Guide are grounded in local stories and traditions, including traditional child rearing practices. It is organized by lessons that correspond to the developmental phases of a great oak tree: Acorn Lessons, Roots of Tradition Lessons, Developing Tree Lessons, and Mighty Oak Lessons. The guide consists of 45 individual lesson plans, each focused on a particular cultural value (e.g., respect, humility, resilience, balance, traditional foods, kindness). Each developmental phase has roughly 10–12 lessons, and each lesson has associated traditional stories and ways that Aunties share with families. The lessons incorporate Payomkawichum (Luiseño) and other local Tribal stories, cultural activities, games, sports, songs, dances, and plant education. The Aunties use the guide during virtual or in-person home visits. The duration of service delivery is contingent on family needs; however, Aunties aim to work with families for a minimum of one year.

Family Spirit Curriculum

The Family Spirit curriculum is an evidence-based home visiting program developed by and for Native communities that focuses on effective parenting, coping and problem-solving skills, maternal and child behavior, and emotional outcomes. Family Spirit consists of 63 lessons in 6 domains: (1) prenatal care, (2) infant care, (3) child development, (4) toddler care, (5) life skills, and (6) healthy living. Family Spirit is usually implemented sequentially over 52 home visits and is typically delivered to families who are court-ordered to receive an evidence-based program, although some mothers voluntarily participate.

3. Advocacy and outreach to the community and educational in-reach to IHC departments

Advocacy, outreach, and in-reach involve raising awareness of the public, service providers (internal and external to IHC), and decision-makers about the scope and problems associated with child maltreatment and the services offered by M2A. These efforts counteract the stigma that has surrounded social services in the community and shrouds problems in secrecy, resulting in underreported instances of child abuse and neglect as well as the conditions that exacerbate these tragedies. The program unites organizational partners to provide an integrated, holistic, and

THE CENTER'S APPROACH TO EVALUATION

Planning and implementing evaluations involved a collaborative and participatory process governed by the Tribal projects, their participants, and communities, with support from the Center team. This included developing culturally grounded and Tribally driven research questions, methodologies, and instruments. Evaluation work was grounded in Indigenous Ways of Knowing (IWOK) and sought to honor Indigenous ways of communication, incorporate cultural values, and integrate traditional knowledge gathering passed down through generations. To this end, the project team engaged with community members; sought the wisdom of Elders; participated in the oral tradition, storytelling, and ceremonies; and committed to keeping community values and context at the center of the work.

culturally driven approach to care. TFS staff and other IHC staff from the behavioral health, medical, and public health departments form an interdepartmental case management team to reduce internal departmental silos.

Key M2A Evaluation Activities

Throughout the Center's team engagement with the M2A program, we embraced the principles of bidirectional learning as we worked together to think through how our work could more equitably, collaboratively, and effectively center Indigenous perspectives and worldviews in the M2A programmatic, operational, and evaluative processes. At the heart of this collaboration was a two-way mentoring relationship that grew organically over the three-year evaluation period. This relationship involved supporting each other, learning from each other, opening each other's hearts and minds to others' knowledge and experiences, productively challenging each other's ideas, and acting as each other's translators, when needed.

The project team gathered information to understand:

- how the M2A program helps to restore and destigmatize traditional social services within IHC (program implementation)
- how families participating in the program experience strengthened cultural family life skills (program outcomes)
- the level of effort to deliver the program (program cost)

In addition, the evaluation included the development and use of a new continuous quality improvement (CQI) tool for services (M2A Word Cloud Personal Reflection Tool, *below left*). To arrive at this information gathering approach, the project team used a collaborative and participatory process that was governed by the M2A team and supported by the Center team. Several evaluation activities guided collaboration on the evaluation. This process included developing culturally grounded and Tribally driven research questions, methodologies, and instruments.

What We Learned

The Center team conducted two rounds of staff interviews and experienced high participation in both rounds. In the first round, between May and November 2021, the Center team interviewed 3 M2A staff, 13 IHC providers, and 2 IHC leadership executives and led a focus group with 7 community providers. In the second round, between December 2021 and February 2022, the Center team aimed for a smaller number of interviews (one staff per IHC department) because of response saturation in the first round and IHC staff turnover. The Center team completed a second round of interviews with 3 M2A staff, 6 IHC staff, and 1 IHC executive.

The project team obtained consent from 12 mothers to participate in the evaluation over a one-year period, from April 2021 to March 2022. However, the Aunties asked three mothers for an interview between June 2021 and March 2022. Aunties were cautious about inviting mothers to participate in the interviews out of respect for the mothers' life circumstances and care for the Auntie-family relationship. Two interviews were transcribed and reviewed.

Cross-system discussions with Aunties, IHC staff, community social service providers, and mothers reflected how the M2A program strengthens families in a caring, compassionate, and culturally competent environment. Several themes emerged from interviews: successful interdepartmental collaboration at IHC, the way that Aunties gave persistent yet gentle support to mothers and built trust and authentic connection, and that culture played a role in empowering families and facilitating healing from intergenerational trauma.

"[T]o connect with the people and build those relationships, we need to know first what the family needs to be successful. So, we must be open to conversations to get the parents comfortable with services and give them a warm handoff to other resources within the clinic. And so, the social services are just that, it's being social, it's being a part of the community. It's going out and creating outreach . . . ."

— Auntie

IHC staff collaborate across departments to coordinate holistic services for families.

To meet the goal of enhancing family access to existing services and promoting positive interactions among family members, the M2A model emphasizes facilitating strong collaboration and communication across IHC departments and providers including staff participation in interdepartmental case management teams with representatives of the behavioral health, medical, and public health departments. M2A staff described the collaboration between departments as a requirement for effectively supporting families. During team meetings, the different departments come together to create effective treatment plans that support and strengthen families, enhance their access to existing services, and promote positive interactions among family members.

"We support each other when we are working together. If the Auntie is having difficulty reaching a mom and I have that rapport already built-in, I support the Auntie and help make that connection."

— IHC provider

M2A provides emotional support for families.

Aunties demonstrated persistent yet gentle support to families that consisted of emotional care and understanding. This type of support contributes heavily to the program's ability to shift children and families' perspective of social services from unhelpful and threatening to dedicated and understanding. Families emphasized and appreciated this kind of persistence from Aunties. The M2A director noted that demonstrating persistent support is particularly important for harder to reach families experiencing chronic drug use or other grave and isolating challenges.

"One thing that I did appreciate was that they never forgot about me. They always checked in on me, even if I couldn't respond or wasn't able to meet up. They didn't forget. They didn't just throw me aside."

— Mother

M2A builds trust and authentic connections with families in ways that are both respectful and empowering.

"[T]here's no judgment in their visits. That just allows Mom to open up and be ready to hear what it is or share what she needs to share in terms of her roadblocks to being a mom and creating a safe space for her children. Once that trust is established, that nonjudgmental space has been identified, and both people feel safe to share, the door opens for education. It's embraced and accepted."

— IHC provider

The M2A program aims to build trust and form authentic connections with families to destigmatize social services. Several IHC staff described a shift from the people they interacted with fearing social services to trusting them. Aunties help bridge the relationship between families and providers by assuring families that IHC is a place of healing where they can feel safe and establish trust—a critical first step for many families. Aunties emphasized that although building trust takes patience, it is critical to the program's success; when families notice the time Aunties spend forming relationships and M2A is well-received in the community, referrals start to increase. Additionally, when families understand and trust that they will not be turned over to CPS, they are more likely to be empowered to seek the help that they need.

"In our community it takes trust to build a relationship and it takes time to build trust . . . . And it appears that our Aunties are able to make that connection. And our department is able to move in the direction of being well received in the community."

— IHC provider

Incorporating culture in the M2A program is integral to healing and wellness for families and staff.

The cultural teachings at the core of the program are unique to M2A and critical to establishing relationships with families. The M2A Cultural Family Life Skills Discussion Guide integrates Western and traditional medicine to support families in the healing process and set them up for success. The guide teaches families how to implement traditional ideologies into their parenting styles, while the Family Spirit curriculum provides families with medical information on the development of pregnancy, the changes to a woman's body, and what to expect during labor. Families respond well to the balance of Western and traditional teachings and report feeling prepared for pregnancy and parenting.

"I thought I knew exactly what I wanted to do that I didn't realize was unsafe for my baby. Like sleeping next to my baby every night . . . I never knew what was dangerous . . . . [M2A] made me more aware . . . . Also . . . some of the classes show little bits of the Native culture . . . it was really interesting to see that and see what's happened in generations. And raising a Native baby to be proud of being Native is a huge thing. That's something that I really wanted, and the main reason I wanted to be in this program . . . I knew that I would be able to learn more about the culture and hopefully figure out how I could make him [the baby] proud of his culture."

— Mother

How We Served the Community

The Aunties and Social Services Director teamed with the Center to create the My Two Aunties Cultural Family Life Skills Curriculum and associated Implementation Guide, Facilitator's Guide, and Discussion Guide. This work is the culmination of years of collaboration that had an intentional focus on program sustainability and replication. Other Tribal communities have already expressed interest in adapting and replicating the model in their communities. Printed copies of these products were provided to the IHC program and are publicly available. In addition, the Center collaborated with the program to develop a legacy plan and the project story video, designed to support the understanding of the program, its origin, and its history.

Throughout the partnership, the Center worked intentionally with the IHC program, co-creating tools and resources to document their program's model and successes so that other AI/AN child welfare organizations could adapt and implement in their own Tribal settings. For example, using the M2A Word Cloud Personal Reflection Tool improved services for mothers. The tool was intended to help understand how the mother feels after receiving M2A services and whether feelings align with the goals of the program. After fielding the tool, the Aunties recognized its potential to serve another important purpose: helping Aunties connect mothers to additional services or referrals based on responses. Aunties expressed that the tool helped them to better understand the needs of the children and families and created inroads into probing for and providing other supports or referrals to additional services based on their responses. Aunties were therefore able to better tailor their services for mothers and improve the quality of their visits. Aunties continue to employ this tool today.

Finally, intense engagement with Tribally driven participatory evaluation by IHC and the Center team had an important impact on changing negative IHC staff perceptions of evaluation. Attitudes about evaluation shifted from something that was initially perceived as a burdensome Western imposition with little usefulness for the program or community to something that represents a useful process that embraces local Indigenous ways of knowing to share programmatic strengths and opportunities for growth. The M2A team embraced the chance to use storytelling as a form of evaluation that aligns with their culture, history, and priorities.

> *"[M]y attitude about evaluation has changed. I think it's because you [Center team] do this in a cultural way, where you're not pushy, you're not upset that we couldn't make the meeting . . . . [Evaluation] was done in a way that you appreciated our knowledge. You wanted to hear from us, and truly the right people are working on this project because everybody I've met has a heart and a true heart for this work. It was a pleasure to do. Being able to tell the story in a storytelling way like we're doing right now is very cultural."*
>
> *— Karan*

Acknowledgements

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My Two Aunties Program, TFS-IHC

Karan Kolb

Elizabeth Lycett-Schenker

Janai Reyes

CNCFR Principal Writers

Michael Cavanaugh, L&M

Charlotte Cabili, Mathematica

Matt Burstein, JBS

CNCFR Contributors

Sonia Alves, Mathematica

Roseana Bess, Mathematica

Jeremy Braithwaite, TLPI

Priscilla Day, Consultant

Emily Fisher, JBS

Robert Lindecamp, Children's Bureau

Art Martinez, TLPI

Erin Sandor, JBS

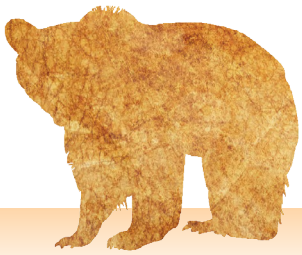
Tressa Stapleton, Mathematica

Sonja Ulrich, JBS

Joe Walker, JBS

Elizabeth Weigensberg, Mathematica

Johnny Willing, Mathematica



Resources

The following products about the program were developed through the Center/M2A partnership:

- My Two Aunties Implementation Guide
- My Two Aunties Facilitator's Guide
- My Two Aunties Discussion Guide
- My Two Aunties Evaluation Report

The Journey of

Collaborative Evaluation With Tribal Communities

2024

Center for
Native Child
and Family Resilience