**Native American Team Project**

For over 6 years, the BSAS has worked with a group of Native people from different tribes and developed a Massachusetts Native American Team to: 1) increase Native youth’s positive ethnic identity and evidence-based skills to make healthy choices; and 2) change community norms and support family members’ powerful roles to prevent opioid and other substance misuse and thus prevent overdose deaths. Historically, the major objectives of this collaboration focus on middle school youth (11-13 years old). In concert with Native cultural values, the outreach work often encompasses extended families, and the whole Native community. The Native American Team (the Team) has provided downloadable or print Native-specific substance misuse prevention resources, and an introduction to BSAS services at Native events. BSAS offers free evidence-based prevention education, technical assistance, as well as publishing support.

The Team co-ran 4 Discussion Groups and developed ***Coming Home***, a culturally-specific prevention of substance misuse guide for parents. The well-received guide was distributed at Powwows, Tribal gatherings, art shows, health centers and other venues.

To “meet people where they are,” the Native American Team members have developed and led a specific “Stomp Out Addiction” dance, and had a distribution table at 9 recent Powwows and other Native celebrations. The introduction to the dance has opened the discussion of the prevention and treatment of substance misuse with large groups of Native peoples. Participants were invited to pick up free copies of BSAS resources, and to learn more about BSAS services. The outpouring of appreciation at these events has been heartening, and the Team is collecting quantitative and qualitative process data to share with our consultant, Social Science Research & Evaluation (SSRE).

**Current Projects**

The Team has developed a Native Youth Supplement to the evidence-based middle school Life Skills Training (LST) © program <https://lifeskillstraining.com/>. We have conducted meetings with elders, youth, and parents to gather input on the Supplement’s cultural “teachings” for 6th-9th grade youth.

The LST-approved ***A Circle Tied to Mother Earth*** includes complimentary cultural content and Native illustrations. It does not replace the LST Sessions, but complements them with Native stories and poems to bring them alive. The Supplement will continue to be shared with our Native partners, Health Education Teachers, School Nurses, and Preventionists through our quarterly evidence-based LST Certification Trainings. The LST-Certified Instructors, Native youth workers, and others can use it to offer programs that will resonate with Native and other middle school youth to effectively prevent substance misuse. BSAS consistently involves additional Native Culture-keepers and professionals and invites them to participate in the quarterly free Life Skills Training certification one-day trainings. For example, several tribal members participated in our last round of LST Trainings and plan to integrate LST and the Native Youth Supplement into their programming.

We have also compiled the evidence-based concepts into ***Stories and Poems for Northeastern Native Tribal Families from A Circle Tied to Mother Earth*.** In conjunction with ***Coming Home*,** parents or community members can use this book to share cultural values and evidence-based practices to help to protect youth from substance misuse. We have highlighted these resources and a national resource by a Native American developer in a section of the MDPH-funded Clearinghouse at: <https://massclearinghouse.ehs.state.ma.us/category/NativeAmerican.html>

Members of the Team continue to do outreach at the Powwows and other major Native cultural events that occur across the Commonwealth. They work with the various tribes to arrange: 1) a table or other means to meet people and distribute **Coming Home**, **Stories and Poems for Northeastern Native Tribal Families,** and other BSAS resources; and 2) an introduction to BSAS services and the “Stop Out Addiction” participatory dance dedicated to the prevention, treatment and recovery from substance misuse. Tribal members have provided positive feedback on how meaningful it is to address this issue, and work on solutions together.

BSAS envisions a long term commitment to working in partnership with the Native tribes, both federally recognized and not recognized, to keep youth healthy, drug-free, and making positive contributions to our Commonwealth.

For more information:

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