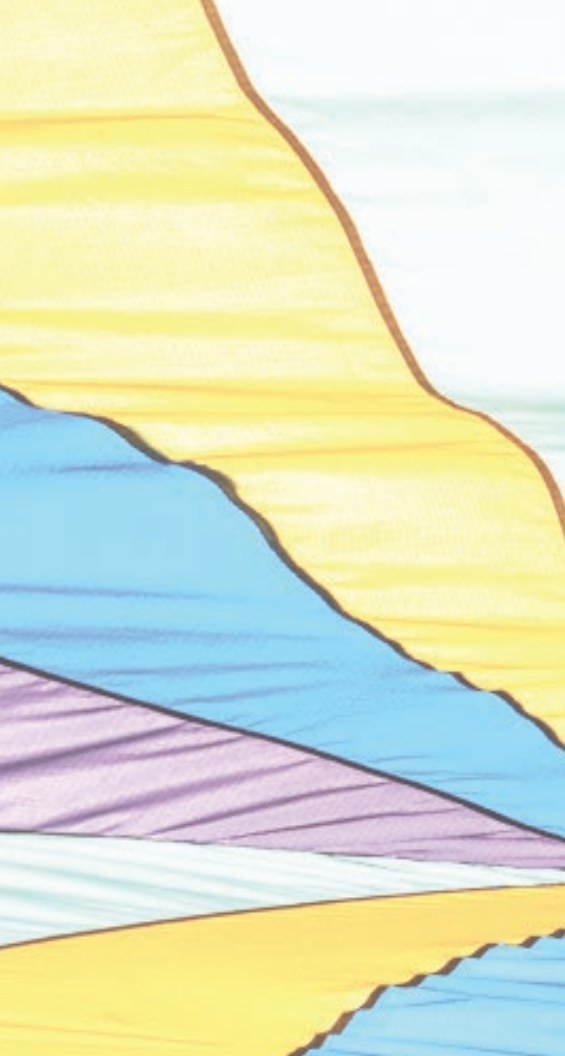


PROTECTING

Tribal Youth

American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth
ages 15-24 are among the population groups
most impacted by suicide.



Protective Factors

Some of the strongest factors that can protect people from suicide are:

- Effective mental health care
- Connectedness to individuals, family, community, and social institutions
- Problem-solving skills
- Contacts with caregivers

In addition to the four protective factors above, research has shown the following to be among the most significant protective factors in AI/AN populations.

Community Control

In a Canadian study of data from the British Columbia Coroner's Office, Tribes with no suicides during the six-year study period (1987-1992) had more indicators of cultural continuity. Cultural continuity was defined as having infrastructure, such as the presence of cultural facilities; sovereignty, such as self-government; having title to their traditional lands; and the provision of services within the community, including education, police, fire, health care delivery, and child and family services.



Cultural Identification

According to a 2007 study, Alaska Native Tribal members following a more traditional way of life reported greater happiness, more frequent use of religion and spirituality to cope with stress, and less frequent use of drugs and alcohol to cope with stress.

Two studies of Native American youth in the Midwest found that those who had a stronger connection to their community's heritage and traditional practices were better able to cope with the stress of adapting to non-Native cultural expectations and less likely to have suicidal thoughts.

Spirituality

Commitment to Tribal forms of spirituality deriving from traditions that predate European contact is significantly associated with a reduction in suicide attempts. People with a high level of cultural spiritual orientation have a reduced prevalence of suicide compared with those with low levels of cultural spiritual orientation.

Family Connectedness

Connectedness to family and discussing problems with family and friends are protective against suicide attempts among AI/AN youth.



Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Sources:

Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2022). *American Indian and Alaska Native populations* [Webpage]. <https://sprc.org/about-suicide/scope-of-the-problem/racial-and-ethnic-disparities/american-indian-and-alaska-native-populations/>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2013). *Risk and protective factors: American Indian and Alaska Native populations* [Issue Brief]. <https://sprc.org/online-library/risk-and-protective-factors-american-indian-and-alaska-native-populations/>

Questions?

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