NEW MEXICO: Native American youth face higher suicide risk

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Many young people in New Mexico’s Native American communities face a host of risk factors that are driving up this population’s suicide rate. To meet this challenge, prevention advocates and community leaders agree, more and better information on the problem is needed. Not all areas experience the same rates of youth suicide, and with greater understanding, prevention efforts can be focused where there is a high concentration of risk factors. Currently, different systems for collecting information on suicides in the state are not integrated with each other or with tribally administered systems, and data collection is further complicated by the fact that some reservations cross state lines. Susan Casias, a social worker who works on suicide prevention and is a member of the Jicarilla Apache tribe in Northwestern New Mexico, describes the importance of gathering accurate, complex information in each case of suicidal behavior. In each instance, she says, she tries to look beyond the triggering event to ask “What was going on earlier?”

Spark Extra! Culture and Community: Suicide Prevention Resources for Native Americans in California [2] features suicide prevention materials from 19 American Indian communities in 11 states and also includes resources on depression, mental illness, and bullying.

Links within this resource

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