

Native  
and  
Strong  
Lifeline



# WHAT IS THE NATIVE AND STRONG LIFELINE?

The Native and Strong Lifeline is the first state-wide American Indian/Alaska Native specific suicide and crisis line

Native and Strong is a part of Washington state 988 funding

The Native and Strong Lifeline exists because of the passage of HB1477 which acknowledged the need for this service for the 29 federally recognized Tribes in Washington state

The Native and Strong Lifeline is operated by and for, Indigenous people

# HOW DOES THE NATIVE AND STRONG LIFELINE WORK?



The Native and Strong Lifeline is accessible by dialing 988 and pressing number 4 to be connected

Native and Strong Lifeline is operational 24/7, 365 days a year

Native and Strong Lifeline calls are answered by other Natives

Native/Tribal Crisis Counselors answer with their Tribal affiliation.

Our Native and Strong Lifeline counselors include enrolled Tribal members, and descendants closely affiliated with their Native community or Tribe



# WHO CAN ACCESS THIS SERVICE?

Any tribally affiliated person in the state of Washington

This includes:

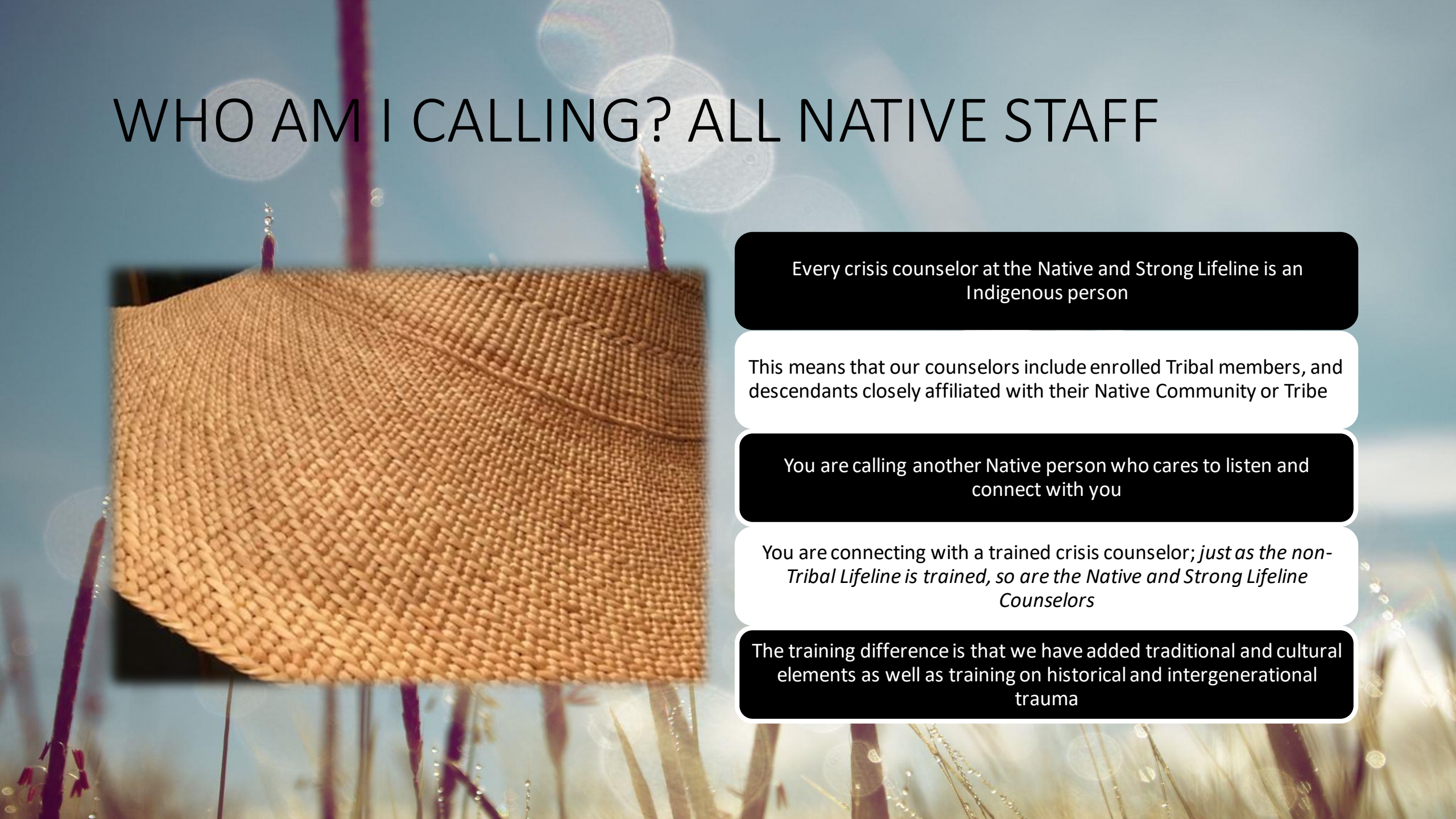
American Indians, Alaskan Natives, First Nations, Tribally enrolled and *unenrolled* people who are of Indigenous descent

This service is not specific to any one Washington Tribe but is inclusive of all tribal people in the state whether their tribe is located in Washington

Not only can individuals access this service but so can concerned family members, Indian Health Care Providers, Social Workers, etc.

Think anybody that is wanting to assist a person who may be in crisis or need support

# WHO AM I CALLING? ALL NATIVE STAFF



Every crisis counselor at the Native and Strong Lifeline is an Indigenous person

This means that our counselors include enrolled Tribal members, and descendants closely affiliated with their Native Community or Tribe

You are calling another Native person who cares to listen and connect with you

You are connecting with a trained crisis counselor; *just as the non-Tribal Lifeline is trained, so are the Native and Strong Lifeline Counselors*

The training difference is that we have added traditional and cultural elements as well as training on historical and intergenerational trauma



# NOT FORGETTING OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS



It is important to us to include our unenrolled Brothers and Sisters

Many of us have families where we share the same blood and some of us are enrolled, some of us aren't

This doesn't make a person less Native

Tribal sovereignty allows all our Tribes and Nations to decide who has membership and who can enroll

This often changes and the requirements are different for each Tribe

Many of us have relatives who are unable or unwilling to enroll for a variety of reasons and we refuse to lose more of our people to suicide, whether they have enrollment cards or not

We are the First People of this land and yet, we are the only population who continually has to prove who they are by way of membership



# OUR TEAM AT THE NATIVE AND STRONG LIFELINE

We currently have a Tribal Operations Manager, Native and Strong Lifeline Coordinator, Washington Indian Behavioral Health Hub Coordinator and the most important members of the team:

## Our Native Crisis Counselors



OUR COUNSELORS AND MANAGEMENT TEAM ARE FROM VARIOUS TRIBES ACROSS THE STATE AND COUNTRY, INCLUDING:

The Tulalip Tribes

Navajo Nation

Ehattesaht First Nation

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Yakama Nation

Spokane Tribe

Quileute Nation

Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation

Tsimshian



# LIVED AND SHARED EXPERIENCES: ITS MORE THAN PAPER

We place a high value on lived experiences

We recruit staff based on their lived experiences and desire to participate in supporting our new culture of healing

We do not exclusively recruit based on degrees but based on experience in our communities, behavioral health and other relevant fields

Cultural traditions and understanding are key qualifications



# CHALLENGES

Gaining Trust- are we real?

Many Indigenous people lack trust in many programs and with good reason

Often, we expect Tribal/Indigenous programs to fail or be operated by unfamiliar people





# OPPORTUNITIES

Promoting a culture of healing across Indian Country

Bringing AI/AN mental health into focus

Being a starting point/example for others who wish to have a specific suicide and crisis line

Natives working together to make a difference for ALL of us



# REFERENCES

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