

School Mental Health Program



Mission

The National American Indian and Alaska Native School Mental Health Program is committed to providing **culturally informed, evidence-based and experience-based programs and services to support the spiritual and emotional wellbeing of Native students. We provide a forward-thinking approach that gives respect to their identity, culture, and sovereignty.**

Who we serve:

Our goal is to serve ALL Native students by working with the entire school community. We aim to provide services for:

- Students
- Teachers
- Parents
- Counselors
- Behavioral health specialists
- Social workers
- Tribal leaders
- Professionals working with Native students
- Native community members

Services we offer:

Education

- Culturally-informed training
- Program Development
- Research

Tradition

- Incorporation of traditional cultural practices
- Focus on culture and spirituality

Support

- Collaboration and technical assistance
- Access to resources and experts in the field
- Telehealth in schools
- Talking Circles

Technical Assistance Topics

The topics below are examples of technical assistance we can provide for schools, teachers and administrators, parents, and students. *Please reach out to us if you have any other specific TA or training needs that are not listed: teresa-brewington@uiowa.edu.*

- School-based health centers
- Suicide, COVID crisis
- Suicide mitigation plans
- Safety plans and precautions – spacing, outside education, small classrooms etc.
- How to teach students with IEP/504
- Grief, historical trauma, and trauma-informed care
- Parenting during COVID
- Kids’ mental health during COVID
- How to talk to students about COVID
- Online teaching tools
- Platforms –telehealth, alternatives to internet access
- Communicating with parents
- Storytelling
- Talking circles
- Teaching and counseling tools specific to Natives
- Schools and mental health
- Working in Native communities
- LGBTQ/2S
- Social emotional learning for parents, teachers, and students
- Working with and supporting students with SMI and SED
- Behavioral support for parents and teachers
- How non-Natives can best support and work with Native students and their families
- Combating bullying in schools/ bullying prevention
- Mitigating absenteeism
- How to best involve Native parents in their students education
- Culturally responsive support systems in school

Virtual Programs

The programs below have been offered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to offer relevant virtual events and trainings as the needs of the school community adapt and change to the environment. [Stay tuned to our programs by signing up for our mailing list!](#)

Return to Learn: Special Weekly Series for the Entire School Community

This series ran from the summer of 2020 through the fall to open the conversation for the school community on how they prepared and responded to reopening for the 2020-2021 academic year. The series combined peer-to-peer networking and sharing of resources, as well as bringing on members of the school community who were having success in the way they were adapting to COVID-19 restrictions to share their experiences and best practices. [Recordings of some of these sessions can be found at this link.](#)

Overcoming the Storm: Special Training Series for the Native School Community in the COVID-19 Pandemic

This series began in January 2021 to support the school community by offering trainings on topics related to the particular issues that schools have been facing during the pandemic. We have invited experts in mental health and education to discuss in the specific concerns that schools should be paying attention to in this time. [Recordings of some of these sessions can be found at this link.](#)

From Longhouse to Schoolhouse: AI/AN School Communities Coming Together

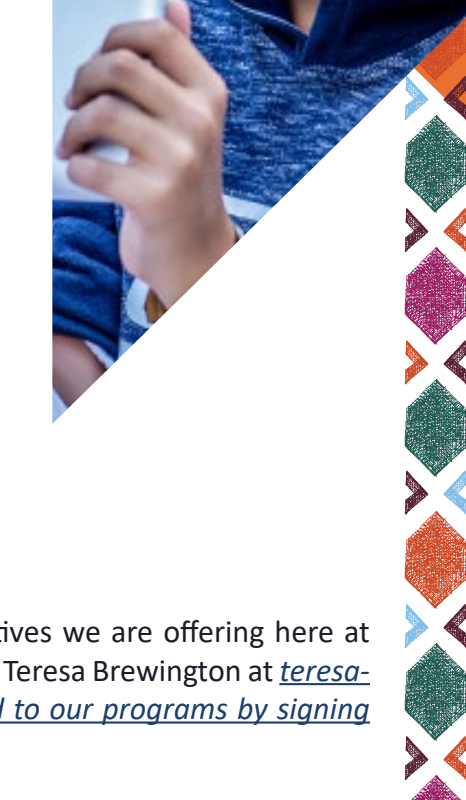
This bi-monthly series covers a variety of topics around school mental health, social/emotional support, and responding to the current issues facing school communities. In this series, we welcome teachers, administrators, parents, and community members to come together in partnership to learn, collaborate, and share experiences and knowledge.



Crisis & Trauma Resiliency Team Technical Assistance

This collaborative technical assistance project is focused on helping communities create their own crisis and trauma resiliency teams. This technical assistance program includes 6+ learning collaborative sessions focusing on the following topics:

- Identifying key stakeholders
- Identifying traumas affecting community
- Engaging local schools and districts
- Cultural considerations
- Community engagement opportunities
- Utilization of media



2021-2022 Initiatives

These are examples of just a few initiatives we are offering here at our center. For questions, please contact Teresa Brewington at teresa-brewington@uiowa.edu, and [stay tuned to our programs by signing up for our mailing list!](#)

Native Parenting Classes and NAFFA’s Certified Facilitator Training

Native youth who grow up in a home where violence, mental health disorders, and/or co-occurring alcohol or substance use disorders are present may end up in foster care within or outside of tribal communities, or living with other relatives or guardians. These are just a few examples that create trauma for our Native youth. To change this pattern, we want to provide culturally appropriate parenting classes for Native men and women.

NAFFA has 3 curricula that focus heavily on the importance of parenting, healthy relationships, and domestic violence. Our center is collaborating with NAFFA by having 10 of our consultants take their “Fatherhood is Sacred, Motherhood is Sacred” certified facilitator training. After completing the training, participants will possess the knowledge and skills to go out into their Native community or organization and implement programming to help fathers, mothers, and families realize their full potential.

IEP Advocate Training

The MHTTC K-12 initiative is partnering with the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) to create a certified IEP advocate training tailored specifically for Native parents and community members. The training will teach participants all of the ins and outs of the IEP and help them feel more comfortable and confident in their ability to advocate for their child.

Cultural Learning(s) - Healing First in Traditional Strengths

Using Native pedagogy beginning with lessons on strands of trauma and breathing, we are developing two curricula; one for teachers, and one for school counselors, which will include modules on topics such as self image, identity, confidence, decision making, choices, and outcomes. Designed for three different educational stages (elementary, middle, and high school), these courses will give teachers and counselors the tools to better support Native Students and improve their outcomes in the education system.

