

Native American Suicide Prevention & Awareness Conference | AGENDA

Thursday, July 9, 2026

7:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Registration / Check-in	
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Wellness & Self-Care Room Sunrise	
8:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. General Session Grand Ballroom A	Invocation & Land Acknowledgement 1st Lt. Governor Charles Jojola, Pueblo of Isleta Welcome Address Honorable Dr. Andy Nez, 25th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Keynote Speaker Dr. Glorinda Segay, MA, DBH (Indian Health Service Division of Behavioral Health Director)
10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Break	
10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Breakout Sessions	From Survival to Strength: Empowering Indigenous Wellness as a Pathway to Healing and Prevention Rio Grande This presentation shares a culturally grounded and trauma-informed approach to suicide prevention through Life Skills Education and perspective change. Participants will explore practical methods used to help youth, families, and community members strengthen coping skills, emotional regulation, communication, resiliency, and self-worth. The session highlights hands-on and interactive strategies including mindfulness, situational challenges, experiential learning, and guided discussion to encourage self-awareness and empowerment. Attendees will gain practical tools and adaptable approaches that can be implemented in behavioral health, school, residential, and community settings to support prevention, emotional wellness, and positive behavioral change within Indigenous communities. Joe Baca, BSHS, PRSS, CHW
	Using Navajo Methodology to Address Suicide Prevention Bosque How can a tribal action plan reduce high suicide rates on the Navajo Nation? Join the presentation of the DAP Suicide Prevention Task Force, which shares the challenges and successes of utilizing the action plan to incorporate cultural teachings and models to prevent the incidence of suicide. Anthony Begay, MSW & Joseph Sandoval, BA
	Fort Defiance Crisis Response Team: A Suicide Intervention Initiative Mazano An overview of the Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services Fort Defiance Crisis Response Team (CRT). Overview will include CRT processes, accessing services, types of services provided, exploration of limitations and recommendations. Collaborative discussions and integrative opportunities will be available to brainstorm feasible solutions and recommendations to address crisis-related incidents within rural behavioral health communities. Eukerison Tsinajinie, MA, LPC & James Leslie LMSW
11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. Lunch on your own (not provided)	
1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Breakout Sessions	Healing Through Story: Designing Behavioral Health Campaigns that Reflect our Communities Rio Grande This session provides a practical framework for developing culturally relevant behavioral health campaigns tailored to Native communities. Too often, outreach efforts rely on generalized or deficit-based messaging that fails to connect with intended audiences. This presentation shifts the focus toward strengths-based, community-driven approaches that center culture as prevention. Steph Poston, MA
	Survivor’s Story of Resilience Bosque We will have a presenter share for 30 minutes his experience with suicide, what it took for him to get pass the suicidal ideations, his recovery with alcohol and substances and how he lives now by giving back to his relatives. Day at a Time Club staff will hand out sheets with listed behavioral signs of suicide; the audience writes down what fits from the presenter’s share. Presenters will lead discussion on the topic: “The natural order of human kindness is to help, watch over, comfort, and protect one another,” with participants highlighting resiliency factors inherent in Native culture. Thelma Begay& Adrian Salliego
	Reclaiming Connection: Cultural Resurgence as Indigenous Suicide Prevention Mazano This presentation examines Indigenous approaches to youth suicide prevention through a framework grounded in kinship systems, community networks, mentorship, and collective healing. The session highlights cultural resurgence such as the revitalization of language, ceremony, and land-based practices as central to strengthening resilience and protective factors. Particular attention is given to intergenerational mentorship and the role of Wisdom Keepers in fostering identity, belonging, and purpose among Indigenous youth, while also recognizing youth as active leaders in community wellness. The presentation further explores contemporary influences, including media and technology, and considers strategies for supporting Indigenous youth across diverse contexts, including both on- and off-reservation experiences. Kelly Vallo, MSW
2:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. Break	
2:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions	Navajo Healing Navajo: Culturally Grounded Residential Treatment and Systems Collaboration to Address Substance Use Disorders Rio Grande Presenters will share how cross-jurisdictional partnerships- between Navajo Nation, Indian Health Providers and Regional Behavioral Health Authorities- can strengthen referral pathways, improve continuity of care, and support long-term recovery outcomes. This session will also examine policy and funding considerations that impact program sustainability and scalability and allow participants to have a better understanding of practical strategies, policy insights and replicable tools to support the development of culturally grounded SUD treatment systems in their own Tribal and urban health settings. Larita Anderson
	Sources of Strength: Community Led Suicide Prevention Bosque In this session, participants will learn about Sources of Strength's upstream suicide prevention strategy by experiencing our strengths-based model firsthand. We will play games, engage in storytelling, and learn strategies to increase connection and belonging. We know that the strength of communities often comes from connection and support, this session is all about empowering people to reflect and connect with the strength they already have. Participants will walk away with activities they can use with coworkers, clients, youth and adults in many different contexts. Robyn Weiner & Kelsey Hopstad
	Positive Dine’ Parenting Mazano Positive Diné Parenting is grounded in the foundation of K’é (kinship), positive parenting practices that foster cultural resilience, mental and emotional wellbeing, and support healthy child development. The curriculum includes eight lessons that focus on traditional parenting approaches designed to strengthen family relationships and cultural identity. Charnielle Desiderio, MPH & Amanda Williams

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Friday, July 10, 2026

8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Registration / Check-in	
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Wellness & Self-Care Room Sunrise	
8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. General Session Grand Ballroom A	Invocation & Welcome Andy Deal Fort Defiance Indian Hospital Board Health Promotion Disease Prevent Keynote Speaker: The Psychological Resilience Critical for Sucess Duncan Kirkwood, 1LT, MPA
10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. Break	
10:15 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Breakout Sessions	Returning to the Sacred Path: A Toolkit for Transcending the Trauma of Suicide in American Indian and Alaskan Native Communities Grand Ballroom A Suicide is a major public health concern in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities, where it is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10–24. Rooted in historical trauma, unresolved grief, and social drivers of health, this crisis requires culturally grounded approaches. The T.R.I.B.E.S. project uses Brave Heart and Chase’s Historical Trauma and Unresolved Grief (HTUG) model to create Return to the Sacred Path, a family and community centered suicide prevention toolkit. This presentation highlights the participatory process behind the toolkit and how HTUG based strategies support trauma understanding, cultural strengths, and pathways toward collective healing. Teresa Gomez, MA. Ray Daw & Esther Tenorio
	From Survival to Service: A Dine’ Veteran’s Journey to Sobriety and Advocacy Rio Grande Personal story and teaching the younger generation on the importance of learning resilience and empowering yourself to build oneself up. Jeri Long, BAC
	From Knowledge to Healing: Indigenous Informed Patient on Chronic Illness and Stress Bosque This presentation explores a Doctor of Behavioral Health project examining culturally adapted patient education materials that integrate Diné traditional knowledge within primary care settings. Focused on co-occurring chronic disease and stress, the project explores whether culturally responsive resources influence provider use of patient education and support patient engagement, stress reduction, and chronic illness self-management. Attendees will learn how Indigenous knowledge and holistic approaches may strengthen integrated care, promote health equity, and improve wellness outcomes in Native communities. Intended audiences include healthcare providers, behavioral health professionals, leadership, stakeholders, and Native community leaders. The framework may also be adapted for other Indigenous communities. Dr. Carrie Anderson Williams, LPCC
	The Teenage Brain Under Stress & Trauma: How We Can Support Our Young Relatives Through Difficult Experience Mazano The minds of our young relatives can sometimes feel complex and hard to understand. Adolescence is a critical period of brain development, and when parents, caregivers, and educators understand how the brain influences behavior, we are better equipped to connect with and support youth. In this session, participants will explore the ever-changing adolescent brain, gaining insight into teens’ emotional and behavioral development—particularly in the context of trauma and stress. The workshop will also highlight practical strategies and culturally grounded practices that help adults support teens as they navigate their emotions and experiences. Elicia Goodsoldier
11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m. Break	
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Breakout Sessions	The Tower & the Web – A Story of Connection Rio Grande Dr. K’s curriculum, ‘Animating Neurological Skills and Mindsets in Indigenous Communities’ (ANSMIC©2021), shares fresh information from the learning sciences about how we learn. Connection is one of the 4 “neurological imperatives” - flexibility, readiness, connection, and unmasking – that show us how brains adapt and thrive. Did you know that your brain works differently when you can remember you are always connected and in community, even when it doesn’t feel like it. Walk away with insight that brings relief and comfort as Dr. K shows you how to ‘change your mind’ to feel connected even when it seems hard to do. Dr. Layne Kalbfleisch, M.Ed. PhD.
	Reclaiming Belonging: Cultural Identity as a Protective Factor Against Suicide when working with Indigenous Youth Bosque This presentation explores culturally grounded approaches to Indigenous youth suicide prevention through storytelling, and the integration of Indigenous knowledge with Western clinical practices. Drawing from counseling experience and community-based work with Indigenous youth, the session highlights how identity, connection, and narrative can serve as protective factors against suicide and hopelessness. Anya Ashley, MS, LAC
	Building Balance: Understanding the Dimensions of Wellness Mazano This presentation introduces the Eight Dimensions of Wellness as identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, occupational, and social wellness. Participants will explore how these dimensions are interconnected and influence overall well-being. The session will also examine how challenges during and after the pandemic—such as stress, anxiety, substance use, domestic violence, and suicide risk—have impacted mental health. Attendees will learn practical strategies to strengthen wellness across multiple areas, reduce preventable illness, and promote healthier lifestyles, resilience, and positive community connections. Davina Nez, MPH
1:00 p.m. - 1:45 p.m. Closing Session Grand Ballroom A	Performance Ryedale Largo, Navajo & Mescalero Dance Group , Church Rock, NM Closing Remarks FDIHB Health Promotion Disease Prevention Team