

CIRCLE-NARCH January 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to the Center for Indigenous Research Collaboration Learning & Excellence (CIRCLE) NARCH January 2025 newsletter! CIRCLE-NARCH is a partnership between the Healing Lodge of the Seven Nations and the Division on Addiction at Cambridge Health Alliance, a Harvard Medical School teaching hospital. We produce original research and evidence-based trainings. Our flagship training, *xaʔtús* (First Face) for Mental Health, prepares peers, teachers, coaches, and other Tribal community members to be the “First Face” supporting someone experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis or challenge.

Here’s what we’ve been up to this month!

Photo: The Umatilla Winter Celebration Friendship Dance Pow Wow.



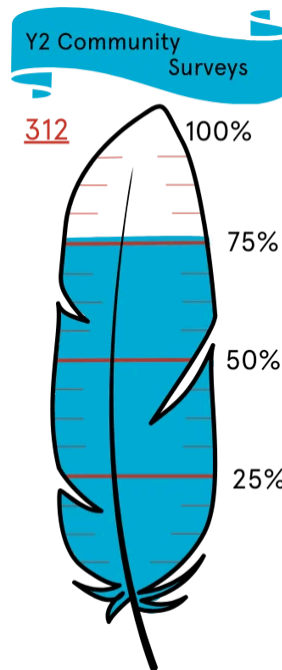


Photo: Elima, one of our TRCs, at the Umatilla Winter Celebration Friendship Dance Pow Wow.

- On January 17th, we met with Working Group members who represent our seven partner nations. We previewed findings from our upcoming manuscript, which will describe our evaluation of First Face within Tribal communities. We are excited to share this first set of findings!
- Our Training & Research Coordinators (TRCs) are wrapping up a 6-session Data Science series with the team from Cambridge Health Alliance. This series will prepare the TRCs to design and conduct original research.
- On January 24th and 25th, some of the TRCs traveled to Umatilla for the Winter Celebration Friendship Dance Pow Wow. They collected community surveys to help us understand the community impact of First Face training.

Our Impact at a Glance

These days, the TRCs are working hard to collect Year 2 community surveys in all seven partner Tribal communities. As of this month, they've collected 312 of 400 Year 2 community surveys! If the TRCs come to your community to administer these surveys, please consider completing one.



Upcoming Events

- On February 25th, the TRCs will be in Nespelem's Government Center collecting more community surveys.
- Did you know that all Healing Lodge staff also completed First Face training? Later in February, the TRCs will share preliminary findings from our evaluation of that training with Healing Lodge leadership.

As we welcome the New Year, we also celebrate new adventures ahead for Hannah Tomeo, formerly one of our dedicated TRCs at the Healing Lodge.

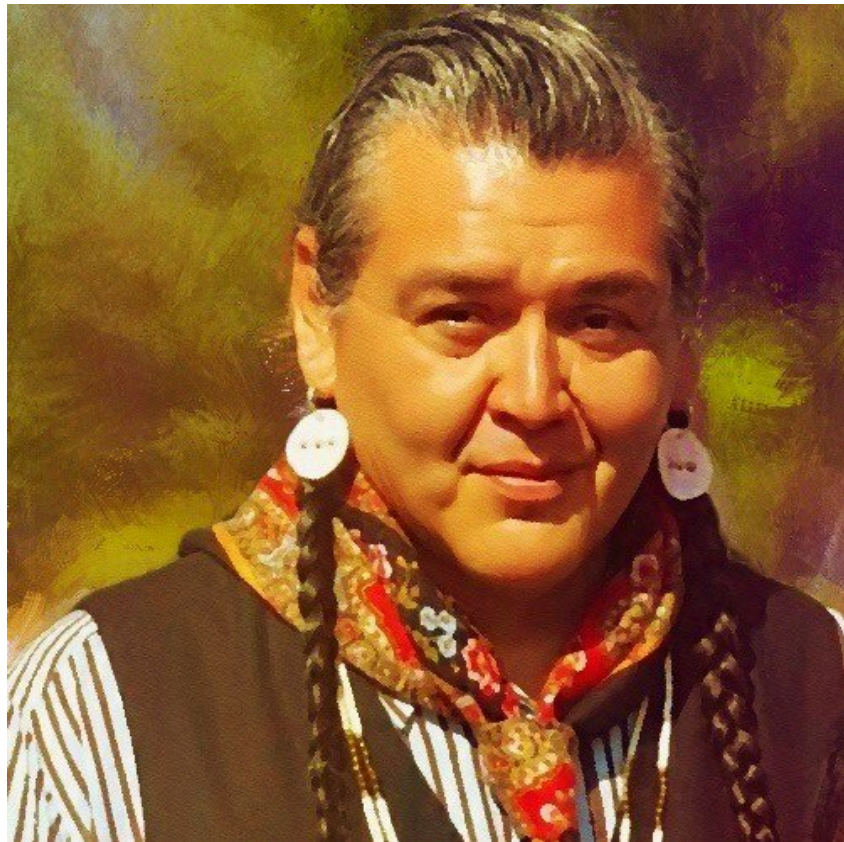


Hannah's contributions have been invaluable, and her passion and hard work have left a lasting impact on our team and the communities we serve. While we'll greatly miss her presence, we're excited to see the amazing things she will accomplish next. Best wishes, Hannah, on this new chapter of your journey!

Community Spotlight

"My initial interest in First Face was the relationship between mental health and addiction, particularly how it affects the youth."

-Brooklyn Baptiste



My name is Brooklyn Baptiste, and I am a Nez Perce Tribal member. I am the Opioid Response Manager for the Nez Perce Tribe. I also work with Federal and State agencies and nonprofit organizations to assist with creating solutions for the opioid crisis.

My initial interest in First Face was the relationship between mental health and addiction, particularly how it affects the youth. I work with a lot of youth in my community and the work related to mental health and how it affects the youth was really important to me. The emphasis on mental health is central to the work I do providing services for the youth in the community, and I really liked that highlight in the program.

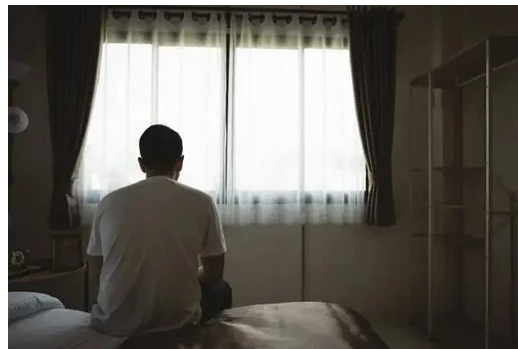
I wanted to expand my knowledge to help me continue to serve our youth. My hopes for First Face for Mental Health are just to help the communities gain a little bit more knowledge and see how it works on the ground as a training. I am interested to see the impact on the ground and to see how the work correlating mental health and addiction can be more emphasized back home.

Culture used to be a part of everything we do. Each community would utilize our own cultural practices in healing. Seeing more communities incorporate their own cultural practices in healing is important for me. I feel that we are starting to use more culture in my community for healing from addiction, for several years now. Using our Treaty Rights to harvest medicine in our ancestral lands in Idaho, Washington, and Montana can be beneficial to our communities, especially for our youth groups. It also helps when they are not constantly on their phones, so they are not distracted from that.

We are in the process of setting up hunting and fishing trips for youth to be able to experience that whole process of preparing food. In our communities, when you take your first fish or bison, you gift it to an elder. This will help youth understand how important it is to be able to give these gifts to other members of the community. To help remind youth of their importance, we will also be having a rite of passage ceremony that will go along with this cultural work. It shows them how important it is to be able to help provide for your community. This will all give them something else to do that is healing.

Prevention Corner

In the winter months, we can all feel a little down. But how can we tell the difference between feeling down, and the more serious experience of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)? [Here](#) are six signs you may be impacted by SAD.



Culture Connections



Embracing Indigenous Worldviews in Mental Health

This month, we spotlight a recent Continuing Education resource from the American Psychological Association (APA) called, "[The healing power of Native American culture is inspiring psychologists to embrace cultural humility.](#)"

In it, Dr. Art Blume, a Cherokee and Choctaw clinical psychology professor at Washington State University, highlights the disconnect between Western mental health frameworks and Indigenous perspectives. Traditional psychology often focuses on individual autonomy, but many Indigenous communities view wellness as interconnected with the cosmos, environment, and community.

Dr. Blume and other Native psychologists call for mental health paradigms rooted in American Indian and Alaska Native values. These approaches should prioritize cultural humility, acknowledge the deep impact of colonization on Tribal communities, and incorporate Indigenous wisdom, spirituality, and traditions into treatment.

As Dr. Joseph Gone from Harvard University notes in the APA article, historical oppression has left profound scars, contributing to issues like suicide and addiction. Healing requires understanding these histories and drawing on the resilience and strengths of Indigenous cultures. With 574 federally recognized tribes, psychologists are encouraged to tailor strategies to each Tribe's unique values and traditions while remaining open to learning from Indigenous worldviews. We're grateful to Dr. Gone for helping us customize the First Face training for the Tribal communities we are serving.



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