

CIRCLE-NARCH March 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to the Center for Indigenous Research Collaboration Learning & Excellence (CIRCLE) NARCH March 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. (Division) 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.



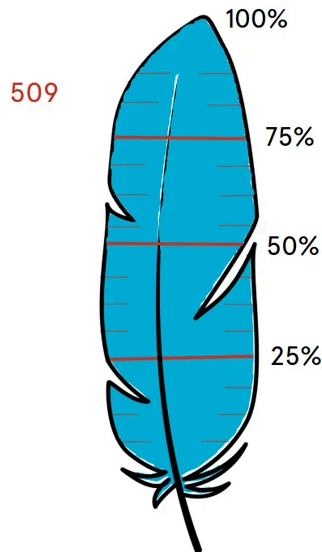
L to R Michelle Zuckerman, Danielle Stensgar, Martina Whelshula, Minnie Bleisner, Brandy Campbell, Nathan SiJohn, Rachel Pelkey, and crouching: Donell Barlow, Raisa Jones

Here's what we have been up to this month!

- In February, the Training and Research Coordinators (TRCs) presented research findings to the Healing Lodge's Executive Team. These findings described our evaluation of the First Face program for Healing Lodge staff.
- On March 11th, TRCs traveled to the Marimn Health & Wellness Center in Worley, Idaho to collect community surveys from the Coeur d'Alene community and visit the Warpath Trading Post!
- On March 25th, the TRCs ventured to Omak, WA to collect community surveys from the Colville community.
- On March 28th, we held a First Face training for Healing Lodge staff.

Our Impact at a Glance

The TRCs have just finished collecting Year 2 community surveys in all seven partner Tribal communities! We collected a total of 509 surveys. TRCs will still be working with your communities to continue to collect follow-up surveys from First Face trainees and share information about the trainings.



Upcoming Events

- On May 16th, the First Face team will take part in the Spokane Tribe's Community Mental Wellness Fair in a break-out session. To learn more about this event, click [here](#).
- The Healing Lodge staff has another First Face training scheduled in April!
- The TRC team is contributing to academic papers under direction from our partners at the Division on Addiction. These papers will report on our

evaluations of the First Face program.

Meet the Team

This month, we would like to introduce you to our coworker Iaitia Farrell. We are lucky to work with Iaitia and it was amazing to have her join us for a First Face training!



Hello! My name is Iaitia Farrell. My Tribal affiliations are Hunkpapa Lakota, Anishinaabe, and Colville. In my early childhood years, I lived in Malo, Washington, about 135 miles away from the Canadian border. I was raised closely with my maternal grandmothers who are the Matriarchs of my family and was always closely connected to the land of my Sinixt people.

As a young girl I had a deep connection to the water, the earth, and my love for art. Today, I am deeply rooted in my culture and I strive for healing, through gathering plant medicines, practicing different contemporary art forms, and using my voice to echo generational knowledge that has been gathered from my ancestors since time immemorial.

I started working at the Healing Lodge of the Seven Nations in September of 2023

as a Cultural Specialist and then later moved to the Family Wellness Clinic as the Clinical Scheduler/Receptionist. While working at the Lodge, I participated in the First Face for Mental Health Training. I felt very moved that this training can help give our communities the tools to become a safety net for our youth, friends, and family who are at risk of substance misuse and suicide risk. I also saw that the training provides facts and connections to the mental health crisis Indigenous people/communities are facing due to generational and historical trauma that our ancestors have endured, which trickle down to the medical source of these issues.

During my time at the Healing Lodge and while attending this training, I have encountered residents and family members who have indirectly expressed suicidal thoughts or motives. In these situations, I applied strategies to ensure their safety. First, I assessed whether the individual required immediate medical attention for any actions they may have already taken. Then, I encouraged them to share the circumstances that had pushed them to such a distressing state. I expressed genuine care for their well-being and reassured them that their life is valuable. Additionally, I offered support in connecting them with resources to aid in their healing, uplifting their spirits, and helping them see that suicide is not the answer. I hope that as the First Face program grows, these Healing Hands steps become useful tools for Indigenous people at the Healing Lodge and far beyond.

Prevention Corner



**NATIONAL
INDIGENOUS
WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER**

In Memoriam: Emily Pike and the MMIW Crisis

In the wake of the heartbreaking and tragic death of San Carlos Apache teenager [Emily Pike](#), we believe it is important to once again reflect on the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). This devastating reality continues to affect Indigenous communities across the nation.

Resources for Our Community

To support families and communities facing these tragedies, we are sharing the [MMIW Toolkit for Families and Communities created by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#). This valuable resource provides guidance when an Indigenous person goes missing. We stand in solidarity with Indigenous communities and commit to raising awareness about this ongoing crisis.

Culture Connections



American Indian Community Center Craft Nights

Founded in 1967 as a social gathering place for American Indians, the American Indian Community Center is located in Spokane, WA and hosts many events for the

community. Currently the AICC is hosting Native Cultural Craft Nights every other Monday night. The events are family friendly with childcare provided. You can find the schedule [here](#)!



Follow us on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages for even more updates!

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