

A Community Response to Suicide Prevention for At-risk Populations

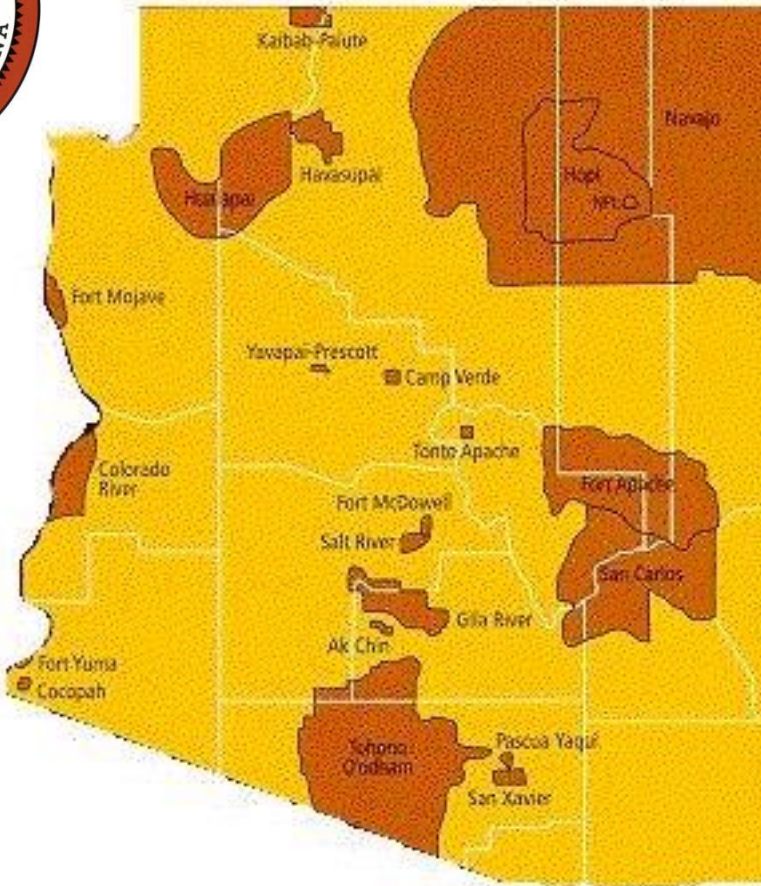
Gerilyn Goseyun & Dr. Thea Wilshire
San Carlos Apache Wellness Center

What We'll Be Covering...

- Tell the story of suicide prevention work among the San Carlos Apache, including the creation of a Suicide Prevention Task Force
- Give detailed explanation of two successful interventions
- Discuss strengths and barriers in the interventions to help other communities who want to do similar work



San Carlos Apache Tribe

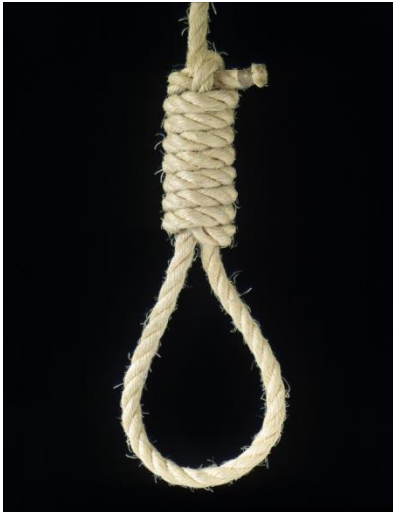


- 15,500 enrolled members with 50% under the age of 25
- 1.9 million acre reservation
- Last tribe to hold out against U.S. govt.= harsh martial law



The Challenge

- 10 suicides by hanging in 2004-2005
- 3 suicides by hanging & over 20 attempts in a two week period in 2009
- Urgent mandate to intervene before earlier pattern was repeated



Creation of Task Force

- Tribal DHHS Executive Director mandated Wellness Center initiate a task force
- Invitation to work with SCAT made by Tribal Chairman
- Invitation to initial Task Force meeting resulted in 51 people from tribal, federal, state, & regional agencies attending



Group Discussion



- **“Why now?”**
 - 46 reasons determined by group
- **“What can be done?”**
 - 73 solutions proposed



Identified Challenges

- Historical Issues
- Socioeconomic Challenges
- Specific at-risk groups:
 - Kids, especially FASD & ADHD
 - Veterans
 - Substance Users
 - GLBTQ
 - Correctional detainees
- Needed resources:
 - Consistent Crisis Response
 - Tracking System
 - Grant writers
 - Prevention & Education




Suicide Prevention Task Force



- Open to all community members
- Started meeting every 2 weeks, then monthly for the last 7 years
- Community needs assessments completed
- Called for assistance from external resources, such as ADBHS & RBHAs
- 3 sub-committees formed:
 - Prevention & Education
 - Crisis Response
 - Legislative Changes
- Logo contest in community

Prevention & Education

- Billboards with wellness messages and crisis telephone number designed by staff posted throughout the reservation and on the highway
- Flyers and posters displayed in the schools and public areas
- Crisis telephone numbers posted in bathroom stalls
- Annual conferences
- Essay contests



Nohwi'ina' Bah goyee
Life is Precious

Need help? Call:
Wellness Center 475-**4875**
Tribal Warmline 855-728-8630

The logo is a circular seal for the San Carlos Suicide Prevention Task Force. It features a central illustration of a hummingbird in flight, facing right, with its beak open as if feeding a small yellow flower. The text 'SAN CARLOS' is arched across the top, and 'SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK FORCE' is arched across the bottom.

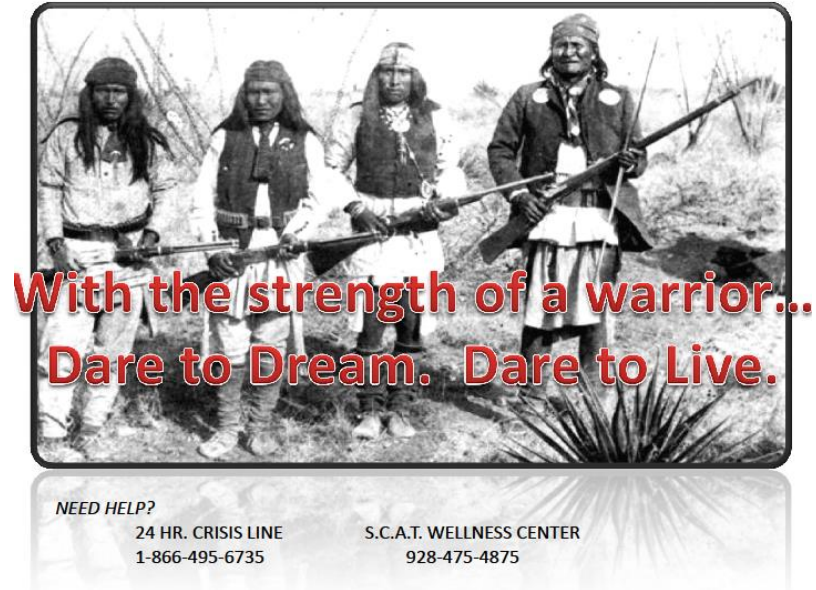
Prevention & Education

- Gatekeeper training on ASIST, SafeTALK, and QPR
- Critical Incident Stress Management Training
- Weekly newspaper articles
- Info on cable access station
- Native Wellness & Safe Relations curriculums in the schools



Prevention & Education

- Suicide awareness information and crisis telephone number displayed before movies at local theater
- Activities strengthening Apache language, culture and traditions
- Weekly KYAY radio show on wellness in both Apache & English
- Youth summer camp
- After school programs



Crisis Response Sub-Committee



- Worked on and negotiated a cross-county, inter-agency crisis response protocol
- Established one crisis hotline number, later supported development of a Tribal Warmline system
- Crisis number promoted throughout reservation
- Shared protocol with other tribes

Legislative Sub-Committee

- Requested ordinances to both enable police to hold people at risk for self harm and for involuntary commitment
- Tribal resolution mandating all people must report suicide
- Developing mental health code for Tribe



Barriers to Intervention



- Culturally taboo subject matter
- Limited financial resources for purchasing gatekeeper training materials



- Tribal and other agency staff turnover
- Data collection and client follow-up challenges with interagency information silos

Young Warriors

- Identified elementary and middle school youth at-risk for suicide during summer (e.g., no school structure, violence at home, lack of food) and started 6 weeks of sleep-over camp
- Had elders involved and promoted Apache culture.



Young Warriors

- Kids loved camp and requested before and after-school programs in the school year
- School saw decrease in fighting and truancy, so invited program to expand into school day
- Currently have 20 mentors & 5 clinicians in elementary and secondary schools
- Highest-risk kids were provided a college-aged Apache mentor who helped in class, in the halls and on the playground.



Young Warriors



- 300+ kids involved, all getting BH assessments and some referred for therapy
- 3rd party billing for therapy was used to support program costs (kids in therapy supported all kids involved in program)
- Identified 32 1st-3rd graders (many FASD) who were suicidal with plan and intervened = no attempts

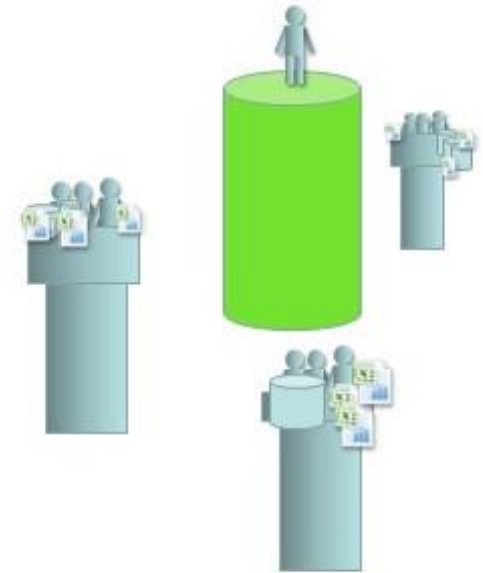
Young Warriors

- Identified a sub-group of 5th-7th graders (most FASD) who continued to have behavioral issues or suicidal thoughts even with mentor support
- These kids needed physically active programming; activities also desired by other participants
- Developed Extreme Warriors for weekend adventures (e.g., hiking, camping, rock climbing, fishing, skiing, white water rafting, surfing, paint ball), earned by program participation



Life is Precious

- Information silos hurt suicide prevention & post-vention efforts
- Working with Johns Hopkins, developed computer-based Suicide Surveillance System similar to White Mountain Apache Tribe's model to better track self-harm patterns and service utilization in the community
- Used MSPI funds for computer data base development, to hire staff, and for community education



Life is Precious

San Carlos Apache Tribe Suicide Prevention Registry Intake Form

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Registry ID Number: SCR _____ Form ID: _____

Report Date: ____/____/____
 Event Date: ____/____/____ Event Time: ____ AM/PM UNK

Name (Last, First): _____ Gender (circle one): Male Female
 Birth Date: ____/____/____ Age: ____ (estimate if not known) Tribal affiliation: _____

Marital status (check all that apply):
☐ Single ☐ Separated
☐ Married ☐ Divorced
☐ Co-Habiting (Unmarried & living together) ☐ Widowed
☐ Unknown ☐ Not applicable (e.g., child)

Education (check one):
☐ Currently enrolled in school (specify grade/level): _____
☐ Not in school (specify highest level completed): _____

Where do they live?
 Community (example: Seven Mile): _____
 Address (specify house # and street if possible): _____

Where did event happen?
 Community (example: Gilson Wash): _____
 Address (specify house # and street if possible): _____
 Location (example: in bedroom): _____

Type of Self-harming Behavior (check one):
☐ Suicidal ideations (i.e., suicide intent, but no physical harm) ☐ Death
☐ Suicide attempt (i.e., behavior motivated by intent to die) ☐ Other (i.e., suspicious death or injury that may be an attempt)
☐ Self-injurious behavior (i.e., person hurts self, doesn't want to die) ☐ Unknown

Method (check all that apply):
☐ Hanging ☐ Laceration/cut
☐ Firearm ☐ Other: _____
☐ Alcohol/Drug Overdose ☐ Unknown
☐ Jumping ☐ No plan/method

Was person using substances within a few hours of event? (circle one) YES NO UNK
 If yes, what? _____

Did event result in injury, poisoning or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse? (circle one) YES NO UNK
 If yes, where? _____

Name of person who made report? _____
 Phone number of reporter: (____) _____
 Was person trained in ASIST? YES NO UNK

Relationship of person who made report (check one):
 a. Family _____ (specify type, i.e. mother): _____
 b. Friend _____
 c. Professional: _____ (if professional, check agency below):
☐ I.H.S. Personnel ☐ Wellness Center ☐ Emergency Department
☐ School Personnel ☐ Fire Department ☐ Police Department
☐ EMT ☐ Tribal Social Services ☐ Detention Center
☐ Tribal Court/Personnel ☐ Other: _____

If you have further questions regarding this form or need the form collected, please contact the Wellness Center staff at (928) 475-4875 or fax to (928) 475-4891.

- Suicide Surveillance System renamed “Life is Precious” by community
- Tribal Council resolution obtained mandating LIP use by all on reservation
- Blue forms sent in or picked up
- On-going training on LIP for Tribal departments & agencies working with Tribe

Other Programs



- Beading groups, especially for FASD youth in Detention
 - Increased concentration from 5 minutes to almost 2 hours
 - Awarded *Best in Show* at the County Fair.
- 30 detention youth at risk for recidivism given intensive support upon release including daily contact with case managers who drive them to school, the Fitness Center, and to teen group therapy



Other Programs

- To provide more activities for all youth, grades 1-12, the local Boys and Girls Club has been transferred to the Wellness Center
- Youth in detention given instruction in Native American Life Skills and Wellbriety programs (i.e., Sons & Daughters of Tradition).



Suggestions for Creating a Suicide Prevention Task Force



- Recognize spiritual nature of work
- Hold established meetings with regular reminders & provide food as often as possible
- Provide frequent updates to community, leadership, and task force members
- Document outcomes and include evaluation processes
- Collaborate with others

How to Reach Us

- Gerilyn Goseyun, Suicide Surveillance System Coordinator
geri.goseyun@scatwellness.net or 928-475-1510
- Dr. Thea Wilshire, Clinical Director
thea.wilshire@scatwellness.net or 928-475-1502

