

Phoenix Families: Suicide Postvention Toolkit for the Native American Community in Los Angeles County



This Project is a Product of the AI/AN UsCC Subcommittee
The LACDMH 24/7 Help Line (LACDMH 24/7 Help Line 800-854-7771)



Final Summary Report 2024-2025

***“We need to have more
open discussions in our
community on suicide.”***

- Community Member



Project Overview

The purpose of the Phoenix Families: Suicide in Native Communities Toolkit Project is to reduce mental health access barriers for AI/AN community members by identifying and targeting the significant, debilitating long-term emotional effects associated with the survivorship of the successful completion of suicide within AI/AN families and communities. Research shows that suicide disproportionately affects the AI/AN community. According to recent data, the suicide rate among the AI/AN community has been increasing since 2003, and in 2015, AI/AN suicide rates in the 18 states participating in the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) were 21.5 per 100,000, more than 3.5 times higher than those among racial/ethnic groups with the lowest rates. There is a scarcity of tools for any family, Native or otherwise, immediately following a successful suicide. The AI/AN community requires the development of a suicide postvention toolkit to be developed utilizing in-depth direct outreach, roundtable discussion, and community engagement to ensure surviving family members and the community may be supported from culturally sensitive perspectives throughout their healing process.

Sacred Path conducted five community discussions throughout Los Angeles County which included Long Beach, Commerce, Claremont, Cerritos and Palmdale. We had 10 individuals who wanted to provide feedback individually, of the 10 we were able to contact 4 who provided us with feedback. There was a total of 45 participants. We used feedback from the discussions to develop the Toolkit and video. We had two in person and two virtual listening sessions to show the toolkit and video and gather additional feedback. At the listening sessions we had a total of 66 community member for an overall total of 110 community members who participated in the development of the toolkit and video.

Community Outreach & Recruitment

Sacred Path developed flyers for the Community Discussions and the Listening Sessions. The flyers were posted on social media and on our website, as well as distributed to other community partners to post and distribute at community events.



ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY FEEDBACK TO DEVELOP SUICIDE POSTVENTION TOOLKIT
HOSTED BY SACRED PATH INDIGENOUS WELLNESS CENTER

COME PREPARED TO DISCUSS:

- CULTURAL/TRIBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HEALING
- COMMUNITY RESOURCES AVAILABLE
- INPUT TO SUPPORT IMMEDIATE RESPONSE
- LONG-TERM SUPPORT
- FAMILY CARE
- DEATH MANAGEMENT

We want to hear input from community members, providers who work with American Indian communities or those grieving or affected by a death by suicide

Attend and complete a community survey to receive a \$40 Gift Card

Food will be provided

Register Here



***PLEASE NOTE: THIS MEETING WILL BE DISCUSSING SENSITIVE TOPICS SUCH AS SUICIDE, DEATH AND SELF-HARM**

Five sessions will be held throughout LA County

EMAIL RSVP@SACREDPATH.ORG

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

Community Discussions

We had engaging, thoughtful and very helpful community discussions with our Native American community in Los Angeles County. The participants were open and had a lot to add to the development of the toolkit. Most of the participants in the community discussions shared that discussion on suicide was so much needed in our Native community, as suicide is still stigmatized and not talked about. Many also said they never heard of postvention and thought the toolkit would be extremely helpful for the Native community.

The community members mentioned often that we really have to emphasize that although there are some similarities between tribes and Native people, there are also many differences. Those who work with Native people do need to know that these differences include differences in tribal beliefs, differences in Christian to more Native traditional beliefs, differences in values as well as their own personal differences. In large urban areas like Los Angeles, Native people can differ greatly, so it is important to ask.

“Suicide is such a stigmatized topic in our Native Communities, we need to talk about it more and we need to involve our youth in these discussions” Community Member

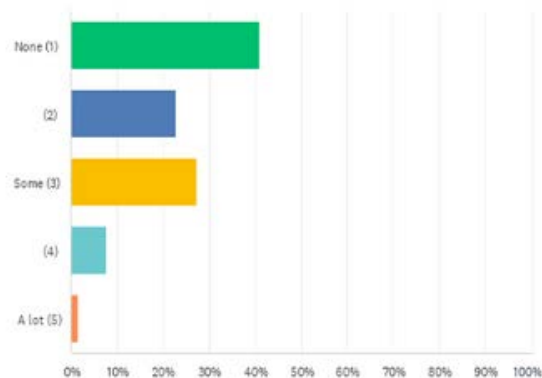
Listening Sessions

We had two in-person and two virtual Listening Sessions in which we shared the toolkit and video. We received a lot of feedback from participants. They really liked the layout of the toolkit and thought the video was extremely helpful. Most of the participants never heard of postvention.

Summary of Pre and Post Tests

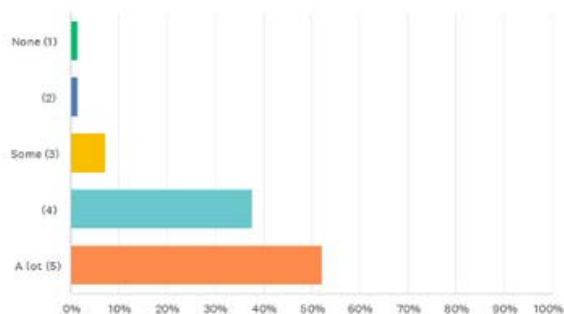
Pre Survey Question 1

Q1 How much knowledge do you have about Suicide Postvention support in LA County?



Post Survey Question 1

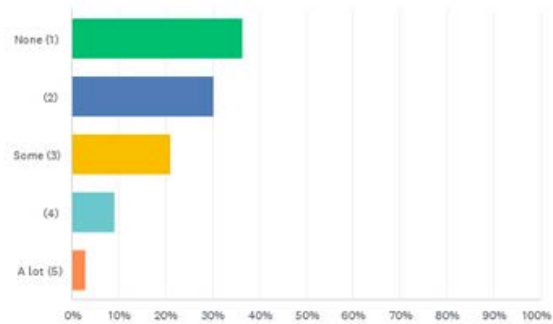
Q1 How much knowledge do you have about Suicide Postvention support in LA County?



The majority of participants had never heard of postvention at the beginning of the listening sessions, after the presentation of the toolkit and the video close to 90% had very good to a lot of knowledge of postvention.

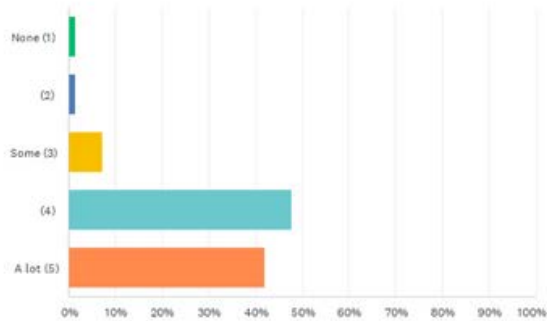
Pre Survey Question 2

Q2 How knowledgeable are you about the availability of support groups for those affected by suicide loss in LA County?



Post Survey Question 2

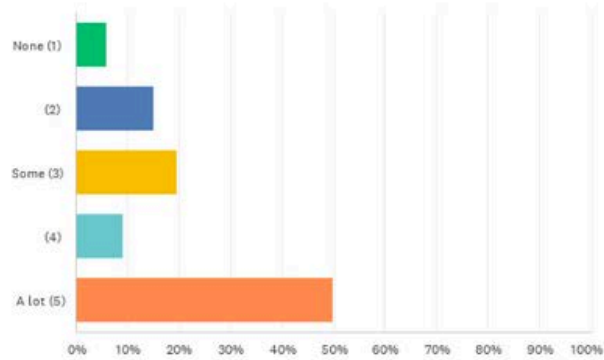
Q2 How knowledgeable are you about the availability of support groups for those affected by suicide loss in LA County?



Only 12% of participants had knowledge of the availability of postvention support groups before seeing the toolkit and video after the listening session 90% had very good to a lot of knowledge.

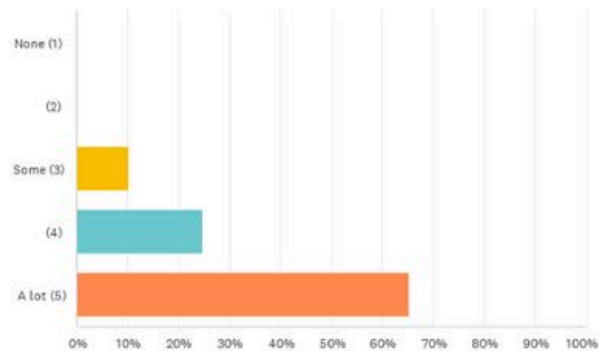
Pre Survey Question 3

Q3 How important do you think Native American community-based programs are in addressing the needs of individuals impacted by suicide?



Post Survey Question 3

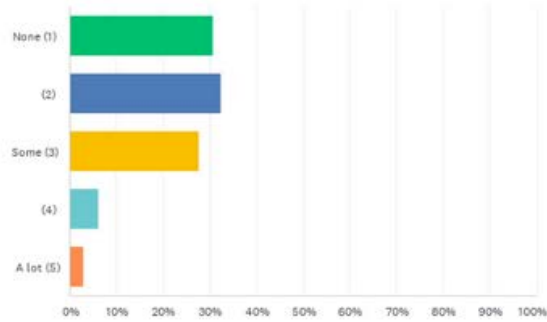
Q3 How important do you think Native American community-based programs are in addressing the needs of individuals impacted by suicide?



After the listening session the majority of participants (92%) said that it is important the Native American based agency address the needs of individuals who are impacted by suicide.

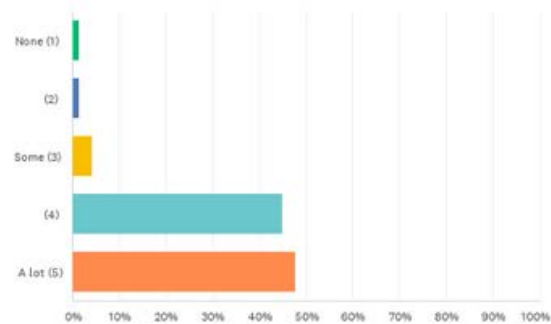
Pre Survey Question 4

Q4 Do you know where to find immediate suicide crisis intervention resources in LA County?



Post Survey Question 4

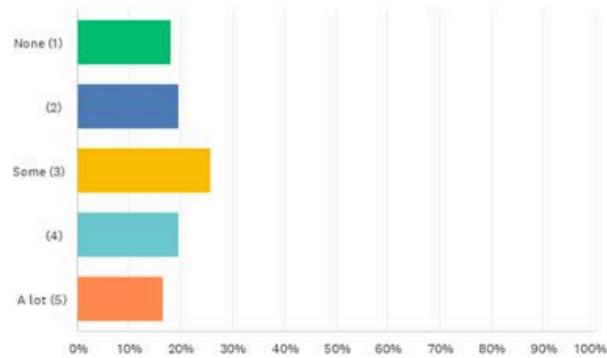
Q4 Do you know where to find immediate suicide crisis intervention resources in LA County?



Over 90% had a greater knowledge on where to find immediate suicide crisis intervention resources in LA County after the Listening Session compared to 2% before.

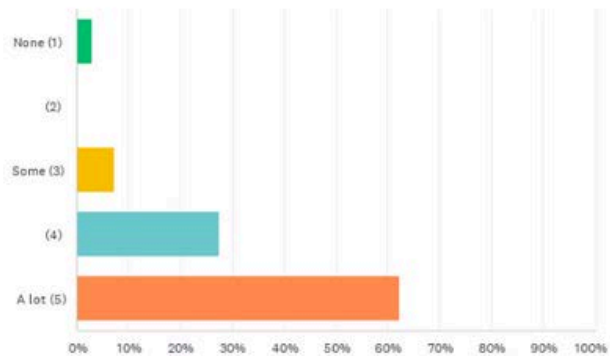
Pre Survey Question 5

Q5 How likely are you to seek out postvention support if you or someone you know experiences a suicide loss?



Post Survey Question 5

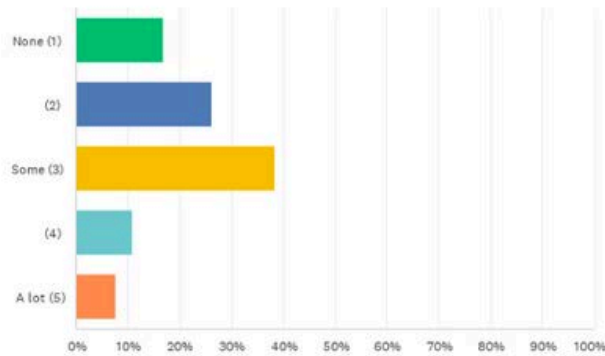
Q5 How likely are you to seek out postvention support if you or someone you know experiences a suicide loss?



The majority (93%) of participants said they would access suicide postvention support after the listening session compared to before (38%) the listening Session

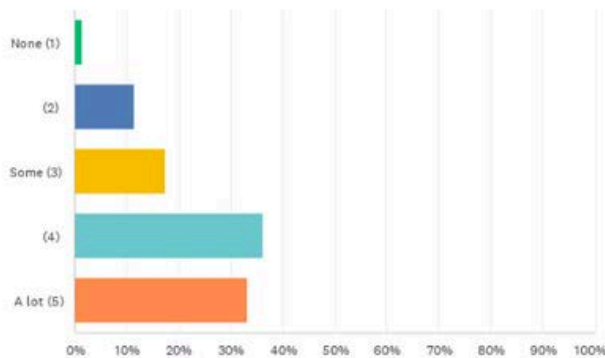
Pre Survey Question 6

Q6 How well do you think current mental health services are addressing the trauma experienced by individuals who have lost someone to suicide?



Post Survey Question 6

Q6 How well do you think current mental health services are addressing the trauma experienced by individuals who have lost someone to suicide?



After the Listening session 75% participants thought that more mental health services are addressing the trauma of individuals who lost someone by suicide, however there was discussion that more mental health services are needed to address this trauma particularly services that are specific for Native Americans.

Toolkit & Video

The toolkit was developed by feedback from the community discussions and finalized with feedback from the listening sessions.

The video script was written by Anthony Chase in Winter using the information from the toolkit. The script was reviewed and approved by the whole team. Anthony also produced and directed the video. Jim Raul was a camera operator on the day of filming and Jim was the editor.

Anthony B. Chase in Winter (Lakota/Chicano) is a photographer and video producer based in Southern California. He has worked on short films and short documentaries in various roles such as editor, graphic designer, camera operator, and directing.

Jim Ruel, Ojibwe, originally from Wisconsin, moved to Los Angeles to further his career in the entertainment industry in 2005. He has had a range of experiences from his standup comedy showcase on Showtime, to acting, video production, podcast hosting and fatherhood.

Three community members participated in the video.



Carrie Johnson, Ph.D. Wahpeton Dakota is the CEO of Sacred Path Indigenous Wellness Center.

Jonathan Chase-in-Winter, Lakota/Wixarika/Zapotec is a community member and a community care coordinator.




Virginia Carmello, Gabrielino/Tongva and Kumeyaay is an elder and teaches about preserving and sharing the Tongva culture.



Overall

The toolkit and video was developed from feedback at the 5 community discussions and 4 listening sessions.



83% of participants reported that they have lived experience with mental health

88% reported that they or a family member used mental health resources

67% have lost someone to death by suicide

The strengths of the toolkit project were having participation from so many Native American community members of all ages 18 to 72, throughout LA county. Other strengths included perceptions from over 30 different tribes, with 83% reporting a lived experience with mental health issues.

Barriers included some individuals that RVSP did not attend as they said, at the day of the discussion or listening session they became too emotional to discuss or hear about such a sensitive topic as suicide. That did not attend but they did provide individual discussions on ZOOM.

Many community members discussed recommendations to further this project by putting together the Core team of Native American professionals, elders and those with lived experiences of losing someone to suicide. They also reported that there should be more discussions on suicide, that suicide is such a stigmatized topic in our Native American community and we need to talk about it more. It was also recommended that we involve young people in these discussions. We also often heard that there needs to be more Grief and loss groups and suicide loss groups for Native Americans.

