

Indian Health Service

Addressing Sexually Transmitted Infections and Housing
Insecurity within Special Populations: Shared Experiences
from the Community Opioid Intervention Pilot Project

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To raise the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.




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Objectives

1. Apply new skills, insight and knowledge regarding STI follow up treatment in AI/AN communities for individuals who have housing insecurities and may have substance use disorder
2. Incorporate resources and curriculum to enhance culturally competent care for AI/AN individuals.
3. Develop tribal community partnerships to work towards implementing psychosocial programs and activities that address housing insecurities and substance abuse.



Objective 1: Housing Insecurity

Apply new skills, insight and knowledge regarding STI follow up treatment in AI/AN communities for individuals who have housing insecurities and may have substance use disorder.



Objective 1: Skills, Insight, and Knowledge

- Knowledge of current statistics and challenges with data regarding AI/AN with SUD and are experiencing housing insecurity.
- Knowledge of rate of STIs among AI/AN population.
- Knowledge of common service needs for AI/ANs with SUD and housing insecurity.
- Knowledge of effects of housing insecurity.
- Knowledge of community/family resources.



Objective 1: Stigma

There is stigma and racism around people who are marginalized.

- Homeless
- Housing insecurity
- People without housing
- Those with sexually transmitted diseases/infections

They are ignored, isolated, exploited, and may become victims of violence.

These issues prevent people from getting tested, treated, and sharing truth about sexual history.



Objective 1. Housing Insecurity

The National Alliance to End Homelessness reports in the United States the overall rate of homelessness was approximately 18 out of every 10,000 people in 2020.

For AI/ANs, the rate is much higher at 45 out of every 10,000.

Homeless youth experience a higher likelihood of high risk behaviors such as inconsistent condom use, multiple partners, survival sex, alcohol and drug use – thus increase their risk of STIs.



Objective 1: Housing Insecurity and SUD

- Approximately 38% of all homeless people abuse alcohol.
- About 26% of all homeless people abuse drugs.
- Homeless people are nine times more likely to die from an opioid overdose than the general population.
- “Survival Sex” – sex in exchange for basic needs such as shelter, food, drugs, etc.



Objective 1: Sexually Transmitted Infections

According to CDC data, in 2018:

- HIV diagnoses among adult and adolescent AI/AN males was 16.2 greater than for white males 9.6 and for AI/AN females 3.0 greater than for white females.
- The rate of chlamydia cases among AI/AN is 3.7 times that of whites.
- The rate of gonorrhea cases among AI/AN is 4.6 times that of whites (and higher for females than males).
- Hepatitis C–related deaths among AI/AN was 9.05 deaths per 100,000.



Objective 1: Types of Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity takes on many forms including:

- Homelessness
 - Living out of car, on the streets, home to home, in the park “unsheltered”
- Overcrowding
- Poor quality housing
- Forced relocation



Objective 1: Causes of Housing Insecurity

- Drug and alcohol use disorder
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Trauma
- Co-occurring mental and behavioral health disorders



Objective 1: Effects of Housing Insecurity

Increase exposure to:

- Malnutrition
- Harmful weather exposure
- Violence
- Communicable disease like sexually transmitted infections**
- Homeless population face a complex mix of serious physical, mental health, substance use, and social problems



Objective 2:

Incorporate resources and curriculum to enhance culturally competent care for AI/AN individuals.



Objective 2: Resources

BOTVIN Life Skills Training (LST)– e-learning program to provide middle school students with the knowledge and skills needed for drug abuse and violence prevention.

Alaska Blanket Exercise - program is a participatory history lesson – developed in collaboration with Alaska Native Elders, knowledge keepers and educators – that fosters truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Celebrating Families – Focuses on families (from 3 years and older) where one or both parents are experiencing substance use disorder and/or alcohol use disorder.

Community Reinforcement Approach and Family Training (CRAFT)

<https://www.anthc.org/what-we-do/behavioral-health/craft/>



Objective 2: Respecting the Circle of Life

What?

- Sexual and reproductive health intervention
- Evidence-based
- Culturally appropriate

Cross-cutting skills training in:

- Communication
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Partner negotiation



Objective 2: Respecting the Circle of Life

RCL teaches:

- How to establish healthy relationships
- How to avoid sexual coercion
- How to prevent sexual assault

How?

- 8 lessons taught to peer groups
 - During summer sports camp
- 1 lesson taught to youth & parent
 - After camp



Objective 3:

Develop tribal community partnerships to work towards implementing psychosocial programs and activities that address housing insecurities and substance abuse.



Objective 3: Collaboration

Community Opioid Intervention Pilot Project (COIPP)

To address the opioid crisis in AI/AN communities by:

Developing and expanding community education and awareness of prevention, treatment, and/or recovery activities for opioid misuse and opioid use disorder (OUD).

The intent is to:

- **Increase knowledge and use of culturally appropriate interventions.**
- **Encourage an increased use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT).**
- Support Tribal and Urban Indian communities in their effort to provide prevention, treatment, and recovery services.



Objective 3: COIPP

In FY 2021, the IHS COIPP awarded 35 grantees (rural and urban areas across the country).

Various approaches: cultural-based, evidence-based, practice-based, promising practices, best practices.

The COIPP Year 1 Annual Progress Report, covering April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, reported the following key findings:

- There were more than 23,000 individuals that participated in community education and awareness.
- The greatest number of participants were aged 25-54 years old.
- Year 1: 484 individuals self-reported as homeless.
- Year 2: 847 individuals self-reported as homeless.



Objective 3: COIPP Grantees

Stable housing is essential to a successful recovery.

COVID-19 emergency housing funds to help clients with homelessness.

Penobscot – Screen MAT participants for Housing Stability. Looking at adding in testing for HEP C, PREP, testing children 13 years and older for HIV.

Lac Courte – All MAT patients get screened once a year or as needed, MAT patients with IV usage, screen every 3 months, offer the screening as requested by clients.

Klamath Street Outreach - STI awareness and prevention we have Safe Sex kits (Contents include, Condoms, Lube, STD pamphlet, and Contact information for Healthcare.)

COIPP grantees – offer STI education, condoms, syringe exchange, referral and follow-up.



Objective 3: Treatment

Discuss barriers:

- Readiness
- Availability
- Location/transportation
- Peer Recovery Specialists/Community Navigators



Objective 3: Harm Reduction Strategies

- Naloxone (safe medicine, easy to use to reverse overdose)
- Substance testing (i.e. Fentanyl test strips and/or Xylazine test strips)
- Safer sex kits
- Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) or Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)
- Referral for hepatitis A and hepatitis B vaccinations (to reduce risk of viral hepatitis infection)
- Sharps disposal containers and syringe exchanges



Complication: Legality of testing instruments by state

Resources

- <https://www.ihs.gov/womenshealth/reproductivehealth/stis/>
- [The Partnership to Advance Tribal Health and the Indian Health Service Address Opioid Use Disorder in Tribal Communities | qioprogram.org](#)
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/harm-reduction>
- <https://www.ihs.gov/opioids/hope/>
- <https://www.healthynativeyouth.org/curricula/respecting-the-circle-of-life/>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources>



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Questions?

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