StrongHearts

1-844-7NATIVE | strongheartshelpline.org
Overview

• **570+** Federally recognized tribes
• **60+** State recognized tribes
• Unique legal relationship with the US government
• Status as Nations
• Sovereignty
  • Supreme power
  • Freedom from external control
  • Controlling influence
• **Vibrant societies, rich in history, culture, traditions**
Traditionally

• Role of women
  • Life givers
  • Leadership roles
  • Held in high esteem
  • MATRILINEAL – clan system – inherit status of mother
  • MATRILOCAL – male would move to wife’s community

• Violence was not traditional and not tolerated
  • Well-developed systems in place to deal with it
    • Banishment; even death

And yet…
Violence Against American Indians and Alaska Natives

- 84.3% Native American women have experienced violence in their lifetime
- 56% Native women have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime
  - 96% at the hands of a non-Native perpetrator
- 4.5 times national average - Rate of PTSD in Native American adults
- 3 times national average – Rate of PTSD for Native American children
  - Comparable to a soldier that has seen combat
- 10 times national average in some states – murder of Native women
  - Where more than 3 in 4 are killed by intimate partners.

How did we get here?

*NIJ Study, released in 2016
Historical Trauma

- Collective experience
- Impact of colonization and federal policies
- Direct link between our experience of IPV and sexual assault and our relationship with the past
- Results in many negative realities/tangible issues and epidemics in Indian Country

“The American Indian, once proud and free, is torn now between White and tribal values; between the politics and language of the White man and his own historic culture. His problems, sharpened by years of defeat and exploitation, neglect and inadequate effort, will take many years to overcome.” –President Lyndon B. Johnson
Barriers to Justice and Safety for Native Victim-Survivors

• “We are related.”
• Cross-jurisdictional issues
• Geographic remoteness
• Lack of transportation
• Historical distrust of local authorities
• Abuser’s access to firearms
• Resource disparity:
  • Shelter, transportation, civil legal advocacy, urban areas

strongheartshelpline.org
We exist to restore power to Native Americans impacted by domestic violence and dating violence by weaving together a braid of safety, sovereignty and support.
What We Do

Helpline: 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483)

- Open to anyone impacted by domestic violence or dating violence or seeking help for someone else

Native advocates offer:

- Emotional support, peer support and crisis intervention
- Assistance with personalized safety planning
- Domestic violence education and information
- Referrals to Tribal/Native resources
- Available daily from **7 a.m. to 10 p.m. CST**
  - Callers reaching out after hours may connect with the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-7233), option 1.
Referring Callers to Local Services

• **StrongHearts Referral Database**
  • 255 Native-centered direct service providers

• **Referral Services across the U.S. include:**
  • Domestic violence programs
  • Victim service departments
  • DV shelters
  • Behavioral health departments
Information and Education

StrongHeartsHelpline.org

Visit our website for:

• DV education & abuse types
• Blogs on abusive “red flags,” how to support a loved one, sexual assault, etc.
• Links to supportive organizations
• Download printed materials
What We’ve Accomplished

- Created a **Native specific referral database**
  - 315 Native providers in our referral database – 255 of which are tribal providers
  - Advocates use our referral database to connect callers to direct service providers
    - Supplement our referral database with NDVH’s database
- Cultivated a strong online and social media presence
  - Facebook: 5,874 followers
  - Twitter: 1,803 followers
  - Instagram: 1,616 followers
  - StrongHearts Website: 149,246
- National Partnerships
What We’ve Accomplished

• Created a team of culturally competent advocates
  • 4 full time advocate, 3 additional part time advocates, 3 advocate shift leads

• Answered 2,840 calls
  • Received 4,737 calls
    • 3,470 during business hours
    • 1,267 out of business hours
What We’ve Learned

- Who is calling us
  - Caller type
  - Caller gender, age, race
- Caller needs and details
  - Peer support, shelter, legal advocacy
  - Children involved, other, strangulation
- Advocate needs
  - Ongoing training
  - Job support
Who Is Calling Us?

Caller Gender
- female
- male

Top Five Caller Ages
- 37 – 39 yo.: 40%
- 40 – 42 yo.
- 28 – 30 yo.
- 34 – 36 yo.
- 31 – 33 yo.
What Do Callers Need?

Abuse Reported to StrongHearts
- 82% of Native victims disclose emotional abuse
- 73% of Native victims disclose physical abuse
- 27% of Native victims disclose financial abuse
- 20% of Native victims disclose sexual abuse
- 10% of Native victims disclose digital abuse
- 7% of Native victims disclose cultural abuse

Experiences Reported to StrongHearts
- 39% of callers report children involved
- 12% of callers report experiencing strangulation
- 11% of callers report making a police report
- 10% of callers report stalking as a result of their abuse
- 10% of callers report homelessness, and additionally
- 10% of callers report housing instability or legal issues
What Do Callers Need?

- 43% of Native victims report needing shelter
- 30% of Native victims report needing peer support
- 24% of Native victims report needing legal advocacy
- 15% of Native victims report needing transportation
- 13% of Native victims report needing professional counseling
- 12% of Native victims report needing DV support groups
- 12% of Native victims report needing emergency financial aid
Hear from Our Callers

A Native woman called because she is being abused by her partner, the father of her child. They have been together for 18 years, but he started abusing her shortly after her mother passed away last year. Her abusive partner is threatening to take her children and abusing her emotionally, physically, financially, and digitally. The caller was most concerned about losing her children. She is Native and her partner is not, so she feels very scared he will be able to take them away.

The advocate was able to talk with the caller about her rights under Indian Child Welfare Act, which helped with some of her fears. The advocate was also able to connect with the caller about the strength of her bloodline and that her mother will always be there with her. This cultural guidance helped the caller greatly.
A Native woman from San Diego called the helpline. She is seven months pregnant and has been emotionally, culturally, sexually, and physically abused by her boyfriend of 10 years. They lived together with their five-year-old son in an apartment they rent from the abuser’s mother. Since filing for an order of protection she has been evicted from her home. She is afraid to even go by to pick up her belongings. She is terrified he will kill her. In the past he has made threats to kill her and has even cut her throat with a knife. He also mocks her by saying things like, “You dumb ass Indian princess!”

The advocate and caller talked about the dangerousness of the situation and discussed options to stay as safe as possible. The advocate also talked to the caller about the cultural abuse she experienced and supported her in that. The caller was very appreciative to be able to talk about that abuse.

The caller was exhausted from juggling so many pieces, including looking for shelter, other resources, and dealing with an open CPS case. The caller and advocate talked about some Native providers and about options for shelter.
Questions? Comments?