ENGAGING NATIVE YOUTH IN PREVENTION

A guide developed by youth leaders and adult coalition members to provide information on how to empower and involve young people in the prevention movement of making communities safe, healthy, and drug free.

**CULTURAL OBSERVATIONS**

- Native youth are more likely to become involved with drugs and alcohol out of peer pressure and easy access. (Center for Native American Youth Voices of Youth Report, 2014).
- Native youth expressed that connecting to culture and community is a way to keep them from risky behaviors found in their communities. (Center for Native American Youth Voices of Youth Report, 2013).
- Rates of substance abuse disorders and other mental health disorders, particularly depression, are also elevated due to historical trauma (e.g., Brails, et al, 2001).

"Much like fire, this pain can either be devastatingly destructive or wisely harnessed to become fuel that helps us to rise up and move forward in life with joy, purpose and dignity." – The StyleHorse Collective

**MOVING FORWARD**

**CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY**

Many American Indian and Alaska Native Youth engage in destructive alcohol and drug behaviors due to easy access of alcohol and other drugs, and the lack of community activities for them to take part in, such as clubs, and after-school events. Involving them in healthy community events, after-school programs, and other healthy activities can reduce the risk of getting involved with alcohol and drug abuse.

**RESPECTING A CULTURE**

Join together with American Indian/Alaska Native communities, incorporate local expertise and knowledge, build on strengths and resources within the communities, and integrate unique cultural practices (Brown, Baldwin, & Walsh, 2012). Embrace cultural differences and consider how they might add to the unique qualities of the coalition. Be authentic in your approach to creating an inclusive and nonjudgmental environment.

**OFFER ALTERNATIVE RESOURCES**

American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest prevalence of tobacco use of any population in the United States, and many get started before the age of 15. Cigarette smoking among American Indian/Alaskan Native adolescents ages 12-17 years old is higher than any other ethnic group at 15.2%. Offering education on the dangers of smoking early on in life can reduce the risk of becoming addicted (National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), Surveys 2008-2010).

This fact sheet was developed by CADCA in partnership with the Office of the National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) 2016.