



Unified Solutions Tribal Community Development Group, Inc.

"Learning Together, Growing Together"

E-Bulletin ~ May 2016



Since 1949, Mental Health Awareness Month has been observed in May by reaching millions of people in the United States through the media, local events, and screenings. The [Mental Health America Organization](#) founded in 1909 – is the nation's leading community-based nonprofit dedicated to addressing the needs of those living with mental illness and to promoting the overall mental health of all Americans.

This year's theme for Mental Health Month is - *Life with a Mental Illness* - and will call on individuals to share what life with a mental illness feels like for them in words, pictures and video by tagging their social media posts with #mentalillnessfeelslike (or submitting to MHA anonymously). Posts will be collected and displayed on a special page on MHA's website.

For more information on mental health and to download the 2016 Mental Health Month Toolkit [click here!](#)
The toolkit includes:

- Media Materials including key messages, drop-in article, sample press release, and MHM Sample Proclamation
- Infographic Fact Sheets that incorporate plain language explanations of diagnostic criteria for mental illnesses, first person accounts about how it feels, a breakdown of common myths and misperceptions, screening data from mhascreening.org and coping skills on the topics of Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder, Psychosis and Recovery.
- Three worksheets that individuals can use to make a mental health plan to help them work through symptoms and challenge intrusive thoughts
- Goodies for social media including sample posts and images
- Banner images for the web
- 31 Mental Health Tips (Also known as the Calendar-Poster)

American Indian and Alaska Native Communities Mental Health Facts

Cultural differences exist in seeking mental health services and in reporting distress.

- An historical distrust of the outside population exists among many American Indian communities. Individuals tend to have negative opinions of non-Indian health service providers, and traditional healing is used by a majority of Native Americans.
- Compared to the general population, AI/AN individuals tend to underutilize mental health services, have higher therapy dropout rates, are less likely to respond to treatment.
- A study of adult American Indians of a Northwest Coast Tribe demonstrated little differentiation between physical and emotional distress.
- The words “depressed” and “anxious” are absent from some American Indian and Alaska Native languages. Different expressions of illness, such as ghost sickness and heartbreak syndrome, do not correspond to DSM diagnoses.

Living in a stressful environment has potentially negative mental health consequences.

- Approximately 26% of AI/AN live in poverty, as compared to 13% of the general population and 10% of white Americans.
- In the Northern Plains study, 61% of the children had experienced a traumatic event.
- The American Indian and Alaska Native population reports higher rates of frequent distress than the general population.

High prevalence of substance abuse and alcohol dependence is tied to a high risk for concurrent mental health problems.

- Alcohol abuse is a problem for a substantial portion of the American Indian adult population, but widely varies among different tribes.
- The Great Smoky Mountain study found that though prevalence of psychotic disorders is similar among American Indian and Caucasian American youth in the same geographic area, there are significantly higher rates of substance abuse in American Indian children.
- A study of Alaska Natives in a community mental health center found substance abuse was the reason for 85% of men and 65% of women to seek mental health care.
- In a study of Northern Plains youth, of those diagnosed with any depressive disorder 60% also had substance disorders.

Upcoming Trainings

DOJ Training - Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners' Expert Witness Training (FREE) ~ July 12-14, 2016 in Columbia, SC

The U.S. Department of Justice's National Indian Country Training Initiative, in partnership with the International Association of Forensic Nurses, is pleased to announce the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners' Expert Witness Training.

The seminar will be held July 12-14, 2016, at the National Advocacy Center in Columbia, South Carolina. The costs of travel and lodging will be provided by the Office of Legal Education. There is no tuition charge for this training.

This training is designed for SANEs interested in providing expert testimony and for prosecutors assigned to sexual assault and domestic violence cases who want to learn more about the effective use of a SANE as an expert witness in their cases. **Priority consideration will go to SANEs and prosecutors working on cases arising in Indian Country.** This class has a mock trial component, and prosecutors and a SANE(s) who work cases together are encouraged to register as a team. Training Officers/SACs/SSRAs are invited to nominate individuals from their division or department who would benefit from this training opportunity.

The registration deadline is May 13, 2016. If interested, please [click here](#) for registration information.

Unified Solutions Welcomes a New Staff Member, Tiffany Wittman!



Unified Solutions would like to introduce you all to Tiffany Wittman. Tiffany Wittman joins us as a Research and Materials Specialist for Unified Solutions Tribal Community Development Group, Inc. In 2012, she graduated from Mary Baldwin College with a B.A. in History. Tiffany brings a diversified background of customer service, leadership, social marketing /advertising, and accounting to Unified Solutions. She is active in her community where she volunteers at a local women's shelter that provides shelter, safety, and support for families disrupted by sexual or domestic violence. Tiffany is also a member of her local historical society as she believes it is imperative to preserve the past for our future generations to enjoy and learn upon. Tiffany resides in Virginia with her husband, her two young sons, and her two dogs.

Welcome to the team Tiffany!

Hello OVC CTAS Tribal Grantees,

Unified Solutions (Unified) staff and consulting Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) can advise and provide training and technical assistance on a wide variety of subjects related to victimization, program management, and other relevant topics. Unified can provide the training at your site and you can invite your key partners and stakeholders to the training. Please let us know what kind of training or technical assistance you determined needing from your recent community assessment or from discussions with your stakeholders. If you would like a listing of training topics Unified can provide please contact one of our staff listed on this e-bulletin.

Unified staff can also provide on-site technical assistance on a variety of subjects ranging from facilitating community needs assessment forums or meetings, policy reviews, or engaging your team in strategic planning sessions. Unified can also coordinate and facilitate conference calls including calls with your OVC Program Specialists. Please never hesitate to contact us. We are here for you. As always, it is such a pleasure and honor to serve you and see all the great work you are doing in your tribal communities.

Here is our Contact Information:

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