COMMUNITY-DEFINED PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

Project Overview

- Five year collaboration between:
  - National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), Portland, OR
  - Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health (RTC), Portland, OR
  - Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), Portland, OR

Project Overview: Rationale

- To demonstrate the effectiveness of culturally situated services for Urban AI/AN youth
- To begin providing an evidence base for culturally rooted interventions for Native youth
- To develop a methodology for community based organizations to evaluate their own programs

Rationale, continued

- To enable the agency to receive state funding for services
  - Accelerated by state and federal requirements for evidence-based practices (e.g. Oregon SB 267).

Development of Assessment Tool

- Conducted focus groups with agency stakeholders and constituents to generate community-defined indicators of Urban Indian youth success
- Identified scales that had validity with AI/AN youth which measured community-defined indicators
  - Created scales where none existed
  - Member checking to assure cultural relevance and that scales captured community-defined outcomes
- Creation of NAYA Assessment Tool (NAT)

Literature Support for Outcomes

- Examined links between outcomes identified through the focus groups and outcomes in the mainstream research literature
  - [http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/PDF/pbPBLiteratureOutcomes.pdf](http://www.rtc.pdx.edu/PDF/pbPBLiteratureOutcomes.pdf)
Relationship of NAYA-identified outcomes to existing evidence

- Lower depression
- Lower alcohol use
- Lower antisocial behavior
- Lower levels of internalizing behaviors
- Reduced suicide
- School success
- Increased school belongingness
- Anti-drug adherence
- Higher social functioning
- Increased resilience
- Better physical health
- Better psychological health
- Better health practices
- Increased physical activity
- Consistent use birth control
- Lower gang involvement
- Perception of less neighborhood disorder
- Better athletic performance
- Increased hopefulness
- Higher levels of employment
- Decreased likelihood of hurting someone

The NAT Collects Data Regarding:
- Participation in NAYA activities
- Demographics
- Financial stability
- Resilience
- Health and access to healthcare
- Housing situation and neighborhood safety
- School belongingness
- Alcohol & drug usage
- Sexual health behaviors
- Discrimination
- Hope
- Community mindedness
- Problem solving/coping
- Depression/suicidality
- Ethnic pride
- Participation in cultural and spiritual activities

Participants
- 126 youth (114 identified as AI, AN and/or First Nation)
  - Urban
  - Receiving case management
- 54% male, 46% female, 1% two-spirit
- 48% 14 and younger, 40% 15-17, 12% 18+
- 27% “unstable” housing (changed within past 12 months)

Living Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Situation</th>
<th>Current % (n)</th>
<th>Last 12 months % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With parents</td>
<td>77.2 (95)</td>
<td>3.3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With another family member</td>
<td>37.7 (46)</td>
<td>3.3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With friend</td>
<td>7.4 (9)</td>
<td>4.9 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With boyfriend</td>
<td>5.7 (7)</td>
<td>4.9 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster home</td>
<td>9.0 (11)</td>
<td>4.1 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Shelter</td>
<td>8.1 (1)</td>
<td>4.1 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>8.1 (1)</td>
<td>4.1 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group home</td>
<td>4.1 (5)</td>
<td>4.9 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Treatment Center</td>
<td>2.4 (3)</td>
<td>2.4 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>8.1 (1)</td>
<td>3.3 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail/correctional facility</td>
<td>1.6 (3)</td>
<td>4.9 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run-away</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>12.2 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures: Independent
- Resilience (4 subscales; Ungar, 2006)
- Hope (Snyder, 1997)
- Community mindedness (Voices of Indian Teens Project, n.d.)
- Feeling Calm & Peaceful (OHT, 2007)
- Participation in Traditional Activities

Measures: Dependent
- Mental health (2 measures)
  - Depression (Short form of CES-D, piloted by Voices Project)
  - Suicide contemplation (1 item; YRBSS)
- Drug use (2 items; OHT)
- Alcohol use (2 items; YRBSS)
- Safer sex behaviors (2 items; YRBSS)
Measures: Reliability

- Depression $\alpha = .88$ (7)
- Hope $\alpha = .86$ (6)
- Community Mindedness $\alpha = .78$ (6)
- Ungar Resilience Sub-scales
  - Relational $\alpha = .73$ (6)
  - Community $\alpha = .67$ (8)
  - Cultural $\alpha = .74$ (6)
  - Individual $\alpha = .65$ (8)

Strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Mean (sd)</th>
<th>Max. Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resilience Community</td>
<td>4.0 (.60)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience Cultural</td>
<td>3.9 (.63)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience Individual</td>
<td>4.2 (.59)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience Relational</td>
<td>3.8 (.79)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Mindedness</td>
<td>2.3 (.65)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>4.2 (1.1)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling calm and peaceful</td>
<td>4.1 (1.1)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Traditional Activities</td>
<td>3.7 (2.8)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Behaviors

- Alcohol Use
  - 44% ever
  - Of those, 53% reported using the past 30 days
- Drug Use
  - 34% ever
  - Of those, 51% reported using the past 30 days

Health Behaviors

- Depression mean = 1.5 (sd = .65) on a 4-point scale.
- Suicide contemplation
  - 8% seriously considered suicide in past 12 months
- Sex Behaviors
  - 36% report ever having sex
    - Of those, 71% used a condom last sex
    - Of those, 75% did not drink or use drugs during last sex

Living Situation Associations

- Youth in unstable living conditions more likely to have:
  - Ever used drugs ($X^2=4.2^*$)
  - Seriously considered suicide in last 12 months ($X^2=4.0^*$)
- No differences in strength scores
### Strengths and Health Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength measure</th>
<th>Alcohol use</th>
<th>Drug use</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Suicide contemplation</th>
<th>Condom use last intercourse</th>
<th>Substance use last intercourse</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ungar Relational</td>
<td>t = -3.1**</td>
<td>r = -.37**</td>
<td>t = -4.8***</td>
<td>t = 2.4*</td>
<td>t = -2.2*</td>
<td>t = -3.0**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungar Community</td>
<td>t = -2.5*</td>
<td></td>
<td>t = -2.6**</td>
<td>t = 2.4*</td>
<td>t = -3.0**</td>
<td>t = -2.4**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungar Individual</td>
<td>t = -2.4*</td>
<td></td>
<td>t = -2.1*</td>
<td>t = 2.4*</td>
<td>t = -3.0**</td>
<td>t = -3.0**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungar Cultural</td>
<td>t = -2.5*</td>
<td></td>
<td>t = -2.5*</td>
<td>t = 2.4*</td>
<td>t = -3.1*</td>
<td>t = -3.1*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>t = -2.6*</td>
<td></td>
<td>t = -1.9*</td>
<td>t = -1.8*</td>
<td>t = -2.5*</td>
<td>t = 2.7***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feeling calm</td>
<td>t = -2.2*</td>
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<td>t = -2.2*</td>
<td>t = -3.3*</td>
<td>t = -3.3**</td>
<td>t = -3.3*</td>
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<td>Part Nat. Act.</td>
<td>t = -2.2*</td>
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<td>Part Nat. Act.</td>
<td>t = -2.3*</td>
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<td>t = -2.3*</td>
<td>t = -3.3*</td>
<td>t = -3.3**</td>
<td>t = -3.3*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion

- Youth demonstrated high levels of strengths despite being “high risk”
- Few differences between those in stable vs. unstable living situations.
- Strength measures are associated with higher percentages of healthy behaviors such as abstaining from drugs, safer sex practices, and lower levels of suicide contemplation.

### Next Steps

- Following youth longitudinally, assessing every six months
- Comparing Native-identified to non-Native-identified youth
- Cultural identity as a potential mediator
- Development of models of resilience/ healthy behaviors

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