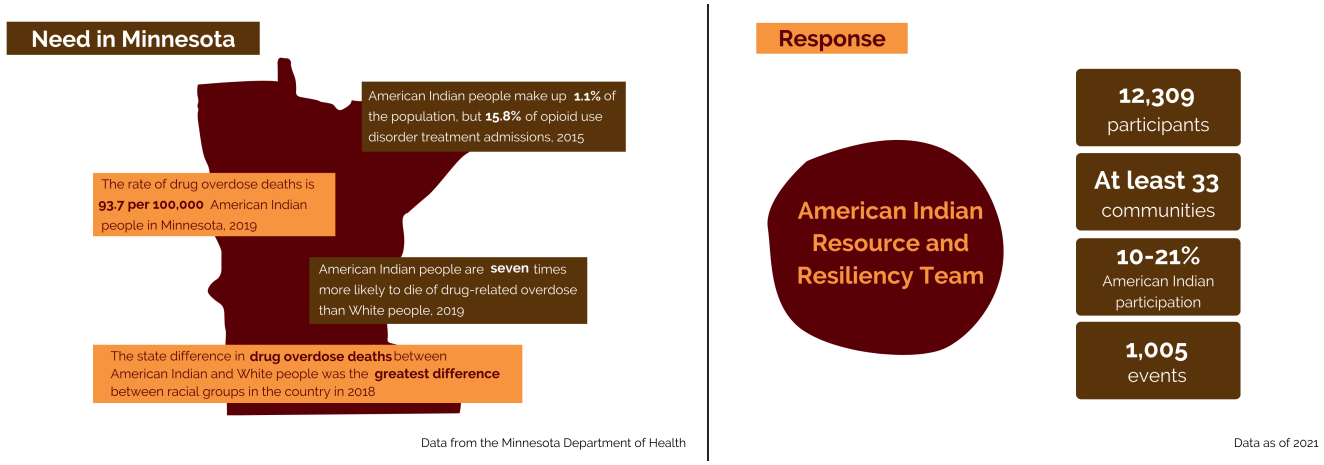
American Indian Resource and Resiliency Team

University of Minnesota Extension's American Indian Resource and Resiliency Team (AIRRT) creates and delivers culturally adapted, holistic health education. This effort occurs within a system of existing relationships with Tribal partners and community members to increase community capacity in addressing the opioid overdose crisis. The AIRRT is deeply and personally connected with the communities it works in and explicitly creates activities developed based on relationship-building, vetting and approval by Tribal governments. All education and programming delivered is responsive, not prescriptive, and will provide a different model for working with American Indian communities.

Responding to the needs of Tribal communities



See this document for an accessible version of the infographic above.

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The role of intergenerational trauma in opioid use

Intergenerational trauma is the passage of the effects of distressing and traumatic experiences across generations. As a result, the harm experienced by previous

generations continues to manifest again in the new. Historical trauma is a specific type of intergenerational trauma caused by events experienced by a large group of people during specific historical events. As described by Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart, historical trauma is the “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across the generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma.”

The relatively high rates of substance use disorder, suicide, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in American Indian communities connects to the historical trauma resulting from the systematic erasure of American Indian culture and connection throughout US history. Learn more about the link between adverse childhood experiences, substance use disorder, and ACEs.

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AIRRT offerings

The AIRRT developed the following programs in response to community needs. If you have ideas about a presentation that would be useful in your community, please send an email to Extension educator Jennifer Garbow at jgarbow@umn.edu.

Current Offerings

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Healing Through History
- Mending Broken Hearts

If you are interested in hosting a presentation of Mending Broken Hearts or Healing Through History, please reach out to Briana Matrious (matrious@umn.edu). If you are interested in a presentation on ACEs please contact Jennifer Garbow (jgarbow@umn.edu).

Past Offerings

- Digital Storytelling
- Mind-Body Medicine Groups
- Photovoice
- Power of Language

- Two-Spirit Class
- Traditional Native Games
- Question, Persuade, and Refer

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Contact information

Briana Matrious, Tribal Community Facilitator, Center for Family, Development University of Minnesota Extension
Email: matrious@umn.edu
Phone: 612-532-8927

Jennifer Garbow, Extension Educator, Center for Family Development, University of Minnesota Extension
Email: jgarbow@umn.edu
Phone: 218-281-8683