American Indian Life Skills Development/Zuni Life Skills Development

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among American Indians 15 to 24 years old, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data. The estimated rate of completed suicides among American Indians in this age group is about three times higher than among comparably aged U.S. youth overall (37.4 vs. 11.4 per 100,000, respectively). American Indian Life Skills Development (the currently available version of the former Zuni Life Skills Development program) is a school-based suicide prevention curriculum designed to address this problem by reducing suicide risk and improving protective factors among American Indian adolescents 14 to 19 years old.

The curriculum includes anywhere from 28 to 56 lesson plans covering topics such as building self-esteem, identifying emotions and stress, increasing communication and problem-solving skills, recognizing and eliminating self-destructive behavior, learning about suicide, role-playing around suicide prevention, and setting personal and community goals. The curriculum typically is delivered over 30 weeks during the school year, with students participating in lessons 3 times per week. Lessons are interactive and incorporate situations and experiences relevant to American Indian adolescent life, such as dating, rejection, divorce, separation, unemployment, and problems with health and the law. Most of the lessons include brief, scripted scenarios that provide a chance for students to employ problem solving and apply the suicide-related knowledge they have learned.

Lessons are delivered by teachers working with community resource leaders and representatives of local social services agencies. This team-teaching approach ensures that the lessons have a high degree of cultural and linguistic relevance even if the teachers are not Native American or not of the same tribe as the students. For example, the community resource leaders can speak to students in their own language to explain important concepts and can relate curriculum materials and exercises to traditional and contemporary tribal activities, beliefs, and values. A school counselor (typically of the same tribe) serves as the on-site curriculum coordinator.

The Zuni Life Skills Development curriculum was developed with cultural components relevant to the people of the Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico and was tested and evaluated with that population. The Zuni curriculum served as the basis for the broader American Indian Life Skills Development curriculum that is now in use, which can be used with other American Indian populations when implemented with appropriate and culturally specific modifications.

### Descriptive Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Interest</th>
<th>Mental health promotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Review Date: June 2007</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1: Hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2: Suicide prevention skills</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome Categories</strong></td>
<td>Mental health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ages</strong></td>
<td>13-17 (Adolescent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genders</strong></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Races/Ethnicities</strong></td>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Settings</strong></td>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other community settings</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Geographic Locations</strong></td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural and/or frontier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tribal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Implementation History</strong></td>
<td>The Zuni Life Skills Development curriculum was first implemented with high school students in the Zuni Pueblo, an American Indian reservation with about 9,000 tribal members located about 150 miles west of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The American Indian Life Skills Development curriculum, an adaptation of the Zuni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Quality of Research

**Review Date: June 2007**

**Documents Reviewed**

The documents below were reviewed for Quality of Research. The research point of contact can provide information regarding the studies reviewed and the availability of additional materials, including those from more recent studies that may have been conducted.

#### Study 1


**Supplementary Materials**


#### Outcomes

##### Outcome 1: Hopelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Measures</th>
<th>Feelings of hopelessness were measured with Beck's Hopelessness Scale, a 20-item, true-false inventory used to assess negative expectations about the future.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Findings</strong></td>
<td>Students receiving the Zuni Life Skills Development curriculum had less feelings of hopelessness compared with the no-intervention control group (p &lt; .05).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Studies Measuring Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Study 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Designs</strong></td>
<td>Quasi-experimental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Research Rating</strong></td>
<td>2.8 (0.0-4.0 scale)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

##### Outcome 2: Suicide prevention skills
The following populations were identified in the studies reviewed for Quality of Research.

Quality of Research Ratings by Criteria (0.0 - 4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the Quality of Research for an intervention's reported results using six criteria:

1. Reliability of measures  
2. Validity of measures  
3. Intervention fidelity  
4. Missing data and attrition  
5. Potential confounding variables  
6. Appropriateness of analysis

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see Quality of Research.

Study Strengths

Beck’s Hopelessness Scale is a clearly reliable, valid, and relevant scale. Participant attrition was addressed with appropriate analyses. The suicidal role-play scenario was a good method for dealing with some of the issues that this program aims to target. All suicidal scenarios were rated independently by two judges who were trained as a team for 18 hours to apply the rating criteria uniformly, resulting in an interrater reliability of .85. Judges rated the suicide intervention and problem-solving skills displayed in the role-play scenarios across 10 criteria using a 6-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The same 10 criteria, with slight rewording, were used by peers who rated their classmates in the role-play scenarios.

Study Weaknesses

The role-play scenarios pose some concerns related to reliability and validity. Other weaknesses of the study include a nonrandomized sample, a high attrition rate due to the need to match samples across groups, and a consequently small sample size that reduces power.
Because both the intervention and control students were in the same school, contamination may have occurred. In addition, the fidelity of implementation may have been an issue with this curriculum.

Readiness for Dissemination

Review Date: June 2007

Materials Reviewed

The materials below were reviewed for Readiness for Dissemination. The implementation point of contact can provide information regarding implementation of the intervention and the availability of additional, updated, or new materials.

American Indian Life Skills Curriculum: Lesson Observation Guide

American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum: Teacher/Community Resource Feedback

American Indian Life Skills Outcome Survey

American Indian Life Skills Training Evaluation

Example Memorandum of Understanding

Handouts:

- AILSDC Training Objectives [PowerPoint handout]
- American Indian Life Skills: Confidentiality Issues & Ethics [PowerPoint handout]
- American Indian Life Skills Training: Fidelity Issues in Cultural Tailoring [PowerPoint handout]
- American Indian Life Skills Training: Why Use the Skills Training Model? [PowerPoint handout]
- Native Aspirations: American Indian Life Skills: Circle of Opportunities
- Native Aspirations: Community Readiness Stages
- Piloting American Indian Life Skills: 12 Essential Lessons! [PowerPoint handout]
- Skill Building Pattern for Lessons
- Stress and Suicidal Behavior From a Native American Perspective
- Suggested Outcome Measures for American Indian Life Skills Development Curriculum


Readiness for Dissemination Ratings by Criteria (0.0-4.0 scale)

External reviewers independently evaluate the intervention’s Readiness for Dissemination using three criteria:

1. Availability of implementation materials
2. Availability of training and support resources
3. Availability of quality assurance procedures

For more information about these criteria and the meaning of the ratings, see Readiness for Dissemination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation Materials</th>
<th>Training and Support Resources</th>
<th>Quality Assurance Procedures</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissemination Strengths

Program materials are developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive, and engaging for an adolescent audience. A variety of training resources are available to ensure effective program implementation. Tools for assessing program outcomes, training effectiveness, and...
Dissemination Weaknesses

No materials are offered to help engage or inform parents. Fidelity to the intervention is assessed using an observational measure, but no information is available about how reliability is ensured. No information is provided on how quality assurance materials might be used to improve program implementation.

Costs

The cost information below was provided by the developer. Although this cost information may have been updated by the developer since the time of review, it may not reflect the current costs or availability of items (including newly developed or discontinued items). The implementation point of contact can provide current information and discuss implementation requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Required by Developer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian Life Skills Development Manual</td>
<td>$30 each</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-day, on-site Key Leader training (includes 6 hours of phone consultation)</td>
<td>$9,000 per site plus travel expenses</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional consultation</td>
<td>Varies depending on site needs</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AILS Observation Guide</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Replications

Selected citations are presented below. An asterisk indicates that the document was reviewed for Quality of Research.


Contact Information

To learn more about implementation or research, contact:
Teresa D. LaFromboise, Ph.D.
(650) 723-1202
lafrom@stanford.edu

Consider these Questions to Ask (PDF, 54KB) as you explore the possible use of this intervention.