Hehl kelew (hey to you all). Nek naw Shaylynne Masten (my name is Shaylynne Masten). Nek Pue-lee-kan-la' esee wee' (I am a Yurok person). I graduated from Humboldt State (Cal Poly Humboldt) with my Masters in Social Work degree in 2018! Since November of 2018, I have been at Two Feathers Native American Family Services and my current role is the Youth Prevention and Promotion Program Director. I get to oversee and help develop cultural and youth programming for our local Native youth and I am honored that my job provides space for me to be able to give back to my community and learn my culture.

I was born an Auntie and currently have 34 nieces and nephews with 2 more on the way! That said, I live my life to serve the next generation! In June, 2019 I gave birth to my first baby and have transitioned into the best role yet, MOMMA! I continue to look forward to where life will take me and I am hopeful and excited for what's next!
Learning Objectives

- Describe the mental health prevention and early intervention impact of two culturally specific practices - the Stick Game and Flower Dance.
- Discuss the process of participatory action research and how to effectively conduct research in Indigenous Communities.

Presentation

- What is ACORN?
- Components of ACORN: Make it Stronger, Stick Programming, Flower Dance Programming
- How did we do it?
- Where we are at now?
- Next Steps
What is the ACORN Youth Wellness Program?

**Background**
- California Reducing Disparities Project funded by the Ca. Department of Public Health-Office of Health Equity
- Two Feathers NAFS: Stick Game and Flower Dance project (ACORN) aims to reduce mental health disparities for Native Americans by reconnecting youth to traditional cultural practices.
- k'iwinya'ya:n [‘acorn-eater’] person, man, people, Indians
Components of ACORN

Make it Stronger:
The program incorporates both physical and psycho/social interventions including values and traditions based on local Stick Game and Flower Dance teachings. "Make It Stronger" consists of 5, 4 hour sessions that provide opportunities to engage with the theme of the day that includes ACORN program principles.

Stick Game Programming
The Stick program includes further training/mentorship as it pertains to the local stick game. This programming is primarily designed for boys and young men. However, all can participate. The purpose of the Stick Camp and Stick practices is to increase cultural efficacy and assist youth to learn the local values and cultural skills of local Native American peoples. A 2 day camp and 2-3 training sessions are part of the stick game programming.

Flower Dance Programming
The Flower Dance program includes further training/mentorship as it pertains to local flower dance ceremonies. This programming is designed to help participants prepare to sing, dance and participate in a flower dance. Programming includes regalia making, song making, discussion sessions. The purpose of the Flower Dance programming is to increase cultural efficacy and assist youth in learning the cultural skills and values that it takes to be in a Flower Dance.
Stick Game

- Primarily played by men - 3 on 3 team event - cross between lacrosse and wrestling
- Ancestors continue to play this sport in the spirit world - this connection is key to understanding the cultural implications of stick games
- Sport used to settle disputes and as a means for fun after ceremony
- Youth learn to carry themselves before they play - opportunity for intergenerational teachings

Flower Dance

- Girl's coming of age ceremony
- Builds a supportive environment around the girl
- CELEBRATES the girl
- Supports young people in learning how to represent themselves, their family, their community and supports positive education and self-esteem
How did we do it?

Community Advisory Committee

- The Community Advisory Committee was made up of 13 members all from local tribal groups. Medicine people, cultural practitioners, language speakers, and community activists and leaders.
A.C.O.R.N
A: Acknowledging our whole selves
C: Connecting community, culture and language
O: Opportunity and access
R: Relationships with others
N: Nurturing nature and spirit

Outreach and Evaluation

Coastal Stick Day Camp
Native Males Ages 9-18
July 2022, 9am-4pm
Two Feathers NAIFS

Two Feathers NAIFS
A.C.O.R.N Youth Wellness Program

A.C.O.R.N Youth Wellness Program

With the help of Robbins Island Community Development Corporation, we are offering a fun and educational day camp for young boys and girls.

11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
Two Feathers NAIFS
What has worked well

- Transportation
- Mentorship- intergenerational
- Staff highlight that ACORN has been a bridge for clinicians and youth to build deeper relationships.
- Youth and staff have become more comfortable going to ceremony and being a part of that community
- Impact on youth- Video
Where are we at now?

**Short Term Outcomes:**
- Increased cultural efficacy
- Increased Cultural Identity
- Increased understanding of holistic wellness- bio, psycho, social, spiritual
- Increased social functioning
- Increased Effective Coping- help seeking behavior

**Long Term Outcomes**
- Decreased developmental Trauma symptoms- relationship improvements
- Improved hope
- Increased ability to work towards community change
Questions?

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