




JourneyToMentalWellness.org



"To bring real change
in our community,
people will need to
come together, across
political, cultural, and
organizational lines."

COMMUNITY VISION FOR A JOURNEY TO WELLNESS

Journey To Wellness is a new community driven initiative, vetted from a Voices & Visions gathering held in 2019. As part of this local event, a collective decision was made to prioritize preventative and mental health crisis response as a way to improve health outcomes of the entire community.

The Voices & Visions event was a two-day community conversation that brought together nearly 200 participants from various entities within the Flathead Reservation and Lake County. It included a broad swath of community members— both tribal and non-tribal, and engaged everyone in a process to identify solutions to the community's most pressing health challenges.

It also resulted in the community voting on one project they wanted to fund moving forward, now called Journey To Wellness, a project with a focus on mental health crisis intervention and prevention.

Since that time, Journey To Wellness has been developing key milestones, with more goals set for the future.

The Headwaters Foundation supported Voices & Visions, a culturally-informed, community-driven event with the intention of improving the health of American Indians in Western Montana.

“We have a lot of really great things going on in the community. Let us build up from the positive activities and expand them into other areas.”





“Family or friends you can be with, you can talk to—we need that. If your friends and family are healthy and safe, that is a good life.”

OVERVIEW

As of today, the Journey To Wellness project is entering into Phase Two (out of five mapped out phases) to deliver a comprehensive preventative and crisis mental health program.

Phase Two includes developing the organizational foundation, to support the rest of the project, with the goal of increased mental health resources on the Flathead Indian Reservation and Lake County.

In Phase One, the Journey to Wellness Community Assessment and Environmental Scan was completed and indicated gaps in mental health services and addiction treatment options, as well as the stigma associated to accessing these services.

According to the data presented in the Community Assessment, there is only one mental health provider per 420 individuals on the Flathead Indian Reservation or in Lake County, Montana. One survey in the assessment also revealed that community members believe that more mental health services would increase use of services and decrease stigma associated with using the services.

Additionally, a full time Project Director has been hired to manage the work and build the capacity of the project. Within the next grant cycle, there will also be a Mental Health Specialist hired to enhance crisis support services.

Other tangible outcomes include a mental health resource website that will be updated regularly, in conjunction with a community awareness campaign to promote the resource website and deliver preventative mental health tips. A Crisis Response Team is also being developed as a critical resource to begin bridging mental health related gaps that were identified in the Community Assessment and Environmental Scan.

Journey To Wellness will also begin hosting roundtable conversations with emergency service entities to look for potential collaborations and identify gaps in community resources and mental health services.

JOURNEY TO WELLNESS MILESTONES

Fall 2019: Approximately 200 community members gathered together at the Salish Kootenai College to engage in a two-day Voices & Visions Event, with support from the Headwaters Foundation



December 2020: Established physical office space, housed within the Center for Prevention and Wellness on the Salish Kootenai College campus



January 15, 2021: Hired Ashlynn Fish, Journey To Wellness Project Director

January 31, 2021: Established the vision, mission, and program objectives to accomplish phased and organizational goals



April 30, 2021: Hired consultants to produce a project brand and website

September 2021: Finalized a new logo to begin branding the initiative



July 2021: Began development of a new website that includes critical community resources

October 12, 2021: Headwaters Foundation announces additional three-year investment of \$750,000 toward project

November 4, 2021: Launched project awareness campaign that includes materials with age appropriate preventative mental health tips and resources

November 4, 2021: Hosted a community update event

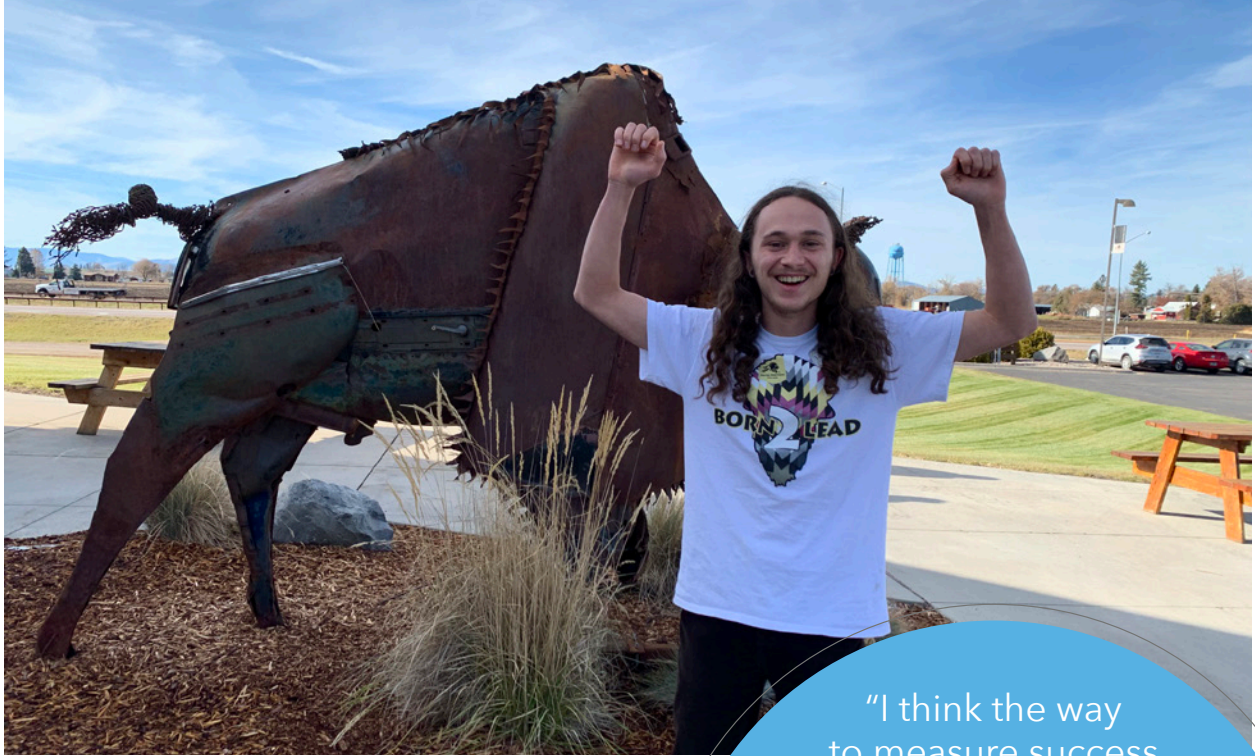


November 2021: Host roundtable conversations with emergency service entities to look for potential collaborations and identify gaps in community resources and mental health services

December 14, 2021: Year-end report information to be compiled and available to community and stakeholders detailing project details and implementation

January 1, 2022: Hire additional Mental Health Specialist to enhance crisis support services

January 2022: Prepare for launch of mental health Crisis Response Team and professional training opportunities such as Mental Health First Aid, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention, De-escalation, and Behavioral Health modules



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

In the fall of 2019, a Voices & Visions event was held at Salish Kootenai College on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

There, the top idea of a journey to wellness emerged, whereby the goal would be creation of comprehensive and accessible mental health services including a mobile crisis unit.

Out of that event, the seed of the Journey To Wellness initiative was planted as the community focused on the need for improved outcomes in preventative and mental health crisis response within the community.

Other ideas that emerged from the Voices & Visions event included: Community informational kiosks; Tiny home communities; Teen life center; Rites of passage; Food as medicine; Youth suicide prevention and programming; Additional health and wellness auxiliary services; Healing intergenerational trauma and shock; Sober living facilities; and Recycling initiatives to name a few.

Subsequently, work on the Community Assessment and Environmental Scan started by diving into what current resources and services were available in the region, with special attention given to those resources dealing with health, or having clear links to behavioral health.

"I think the way to measure success should be a combination of quantitative standards based on specific outcomes for community members and qualitative reflections from those accessing the system about the experience, changes they have seen and how they are feeling."

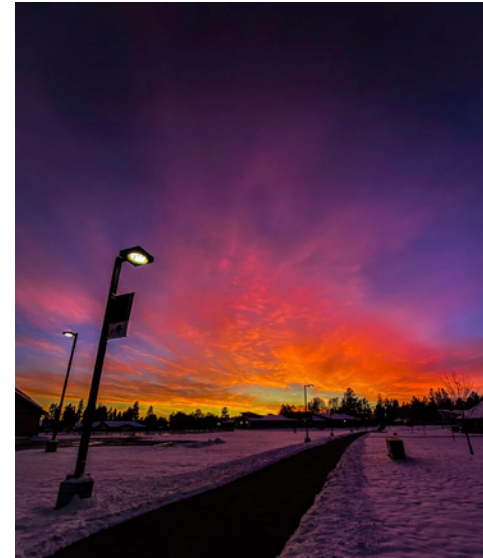
Additionally, focus group discussions were held, key informant interviews conducted, and a review of existing source materials were also considered. The interviews included professionals from a variety of tribal and non-tribal programs, as well as parents, elders, and youth.

Surveys were also distributed to partner agencies, and other stakeholders that assist the target population. A second survey was distributed to the community and parents. Confidentiality was provided to those sharing anecdotal and qualitative information, as well as for focus group participants.

Staff from the Salish Kootenai College Center for Prevention and Wellness, who are overseeing the Journey To Wellness Project, along with the JTW Core Team, assisted in the collection of data, contacting agencies for program information, connecting with stakeholders for interviews, collecting data, and educating the community about the goals of the program.

Today the Community Assessment and Environmental Scan is helpful as a "snapshot" of information from all of these sources to provide a current picture of the level of services, challenges, needs and existing gaps that impact the target population.

Data is covering a period going back in some cases up to five years, as that was the most current information.



Big Ideas	PEOPLE	PURPOSE
Journey Towards Well-being	Who benefits from this? Schools - Crisis services, Crisis services, Crisis services, Crisis services	What problem are we addressing together? Access to mental health services, Access to mental health services, Access to mental health services
Our key partners and who partners (leads get an?)	Who is not here but should be included? Schools, Crisis services, Crisis services, Crisis services	What will we test? Schools, Crisis services, Crisis services, Crisis services
Who is not here but should be included?	How will we test it? Schools, Crisis services, Crisis services, Crisis services	Which resources do we need? Schools, Crisis services, Crisis services, Crisis services
What measures will show us when we are making progress and when we should stop?	Reflection	

Journey Towards Well-being

#DIGNIFIED CARE

Healthy People / Communities

Re-assess/Respond

Outreach Community Education

Resources

"CHINITS VAN"

Develop Mobile Crisis Unit

TRAINING

Gather DATA

Build NETWORK PREVENTION

Develop/Identify curriculum for training 0-5, School-Age Adults/Elders

Re-assess/Respond

Some of the key findings in the Community Assessment and Environmental Scan include:

Raising the profile of service providers for behavioral health with better and more accessible connections such as a local app, online profiles, service description, and examples of “real life” experiences by clients could change the local culture around seeking assistance.

Changing the view

of mental health issues and available services was frequently brought out as a solution to increasing people’s use of services and reducing historical stigmas.

One of the challenges

that many respondents had faced personally or with a family member or friend was an inability to leave a violent or abusive relationship.

Community members believe that

personal relationships

have helped to get past certain tribal and non-tribal divisions more effectively than at the leadership level.

Several schools showed separation rates

greater than 10% between Native American students and white students graduating.

Under years of life lost or premature mortality, which includes all deaths to people under age 75,

Lake County was at **9,600**, the Montana average was 7,200 and top performing counties in the U.S. were at 5,500.

Alcohol-impaired driving deaths continued to be very high with

61% for Lake County, 45% for the State of Montana and the highest achieving areas in the U.S. at 11%.

It was the overwhelming perception by survey and interview respondents that the local area has limited options for services that promote social and emotional wellness.

Children in poverty was at **26%** in Lake County, compared to 16% for the state and 16% in the U.S.

Vehicle crash deaths were at **24** (per 100,000) in Lake County, 19 for the Montana average and 9 for the top achieving counties in the U.S.

COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is the guiding concept for the work carried out on behalf of the Journey To Wellness project. It is an approach that involves collective, reflective, and systematic inquiry where researchers and community stakeholders engage as equal partners in all steps of the process. The idea with CBPR is to work with stakeholders to identify relevant concerns, expand local capacity, and promote community engagement.

Fundamentally, CBPR encourages the honest exchange of information, leading to critical analysis of the power relationships found within any community. CBPR advocates for power to be shared between the researcher and the researched. It supports the value of experiential knowledge and is aimed at improving situations and practices.

“A good life is about enjoying each day. Not worrying. Being able to sleep. And doing it as much as possible without having to take a prescription.”



COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Working together, collaborative partnerships are at the heart of the Journey To Wellness project. The following entities are an important part of the initiative to improve mental health resources in the region.



Headwaters Foundation
<https://www.headwatersmt.org>



Shodair Children's Hospital
<https://shodair.org/psychiatry/>



Salish Kootenai College Center for Prevention & Wellness
<http://www.skc.edu/cpw/>



CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets)
<https://whitebirdclinic.org/cahoots/>



SAFE Harbor
<https://safeharbormt.org>



St. Luke Community Healthcare Foundation
<https://stlukehealthcare.org/about-st-luke-foundation/>



Providence St. Joseph Medical Center
<https://www.providence.org/locations/mt/st-joseph-medical-center>



Never Alone Recovery Support Services
<https://www.narssmontana.org/>



STEERING COMMITTEE

Erin Rumelhart
Director of Nursing
Providence Health Care
erin.rumelhart@providence.org

Dana Grant
Director of Development
SAFE Harbor
dana@safeharbormt.org

Leigh Ann Courville
Faculty, Early Childhood
Education Chair
Division of Education
Salish Kootenai College
leighann_courville@skc.edu

Desiree Fox
Supervisory Clinical
Psychologist
Tribal Health of CSKT
desiree.fox@cskthealth.org

Teresa Nygaard
Foundation Director
St. Luke Health Care Foundation
tnygaard@stlukehealthcare.org

Joelfre L. Grant
Director, Tribal Initiative
Brazelton Touchpoints Center
Boston Children's Hospital
joelfre.grant@childrens.harvard.edu

PROJECT TEAM



Ashlynn Fish
Project Director
Journey To Wellness
Salish Kootenai College
ashlynn_fish@skc.edu
406.275.4051



Kellie Caldbeck
Program Director
Center for Prevention
and Wellness
Salish Kootenai College
kellie_caldbeck@skc.edu
406.275.4744



Brooke Wagner
Program Coordinator
Center for Prevention
and Wellness
Salish Kootenai College
brooke_wagner@skc.edu
406.275.4913



JOURNEY TO WELLNESS GOALS

Website Updates

A site dedicated to providing the most up-to-date crisis response resources for the community to enhance positive outcomes of preventative and mental health crisis situations.

Crisis Response Team

Trained providers who can assist in situations of mental health crisis.

Project Awareness Campaign

Outreach to pertinent stakeholders and community members, regarding the potential to collaborate and partner for improved responses in preventative and crisis response.

Community Events

Community events that include updates and achievements for the Journey To Wellness initiative.

Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders, including training and formal and informal agreements as the project continues to develop.



PO Box 70
58138 US Highway 93
Pablo, MT 59855
406.275.4051

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