



Native Americans and Tribal Populations

Native American and tribal communities are especially vulnerable to substance use disorders. [Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health](https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH120/NSDUH120/SR120-treatment-need-AIAN.htm) (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH120/NSDUH120/SR120-treatment-need-AIAN.htm>) shows that American Indians or Alaska Natives were more likely than other racial and ethnic populations to have needed treatment for substance use disorders between 2003 and 2011, including for alcohol use (14.4 versus 7.6 percent) and illicit drug use (6.5 versus 3.1 percent).

Documentation of substance misuse, including opioid use disorder and overdose, may also be underestimated if neighboring communities provide emergency medical services and do not identify “tribal” status in records. This lack of data impacts the ability of tribes to apply for funds to support substance use disorder treatment programs and track their success in implementing these programs.

There are a number of barriers to treatment in tribal communities, including limited resources, [stigma](#) ([/toolkits/substance-abuse/4/stigma](#)), and fear of arrest. Tribal communities may not have naloxone available or people who are trained to administer naloxone. Additionally, there is a lack of education about how to help someone who is overdosing.

One rural substance use disorder treatment program serving tribal populations contracted with a native project coordinator who has existing relationships with contacts at partner tribes. Programs have also invested in social marketing campaigns to ensure that the messages of the program are tailored to the culture of the community.

Other resources to address substance use disorders include the [Northwest Tribal Substance Abuse Action Plan](http://www.npaihb.org/images/epicenter_docs/MSPI/THRIVE/2012/FINAL%20-%20NW%20Tribal%20Substance%20Abuse%20Action%20Plan.pdf) (http://www.npaihb.org/images/epicenter_docs/MSPI/THRIVE/2012/FINAL%20-%20NW%20Tribal%20Substance%20Abuse%20Action%20Plan.pdf).

Resources to Learn More

[Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program](https://www.ihs.gov/asap/) (<https://www.ihs.gov/asap/>).

Website

This website provides a collection of information and resources to address substance abuse in American Indian and Alaskan Native populations such as screening tools, trainings, treatment options, and technical assistance.

Organization: Indian Health Services

[Systematic Review of Interventions Focusing on Indigenous Adolescent Mental Health and Substance Use](https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider205/journal_files/vol22/22_3_2015_36_antonio.pdf) (https://coloradosph.cuanschutz.edu/docs/librariesprovider205/journal_files/vol22/22_3_2015_36_antonio.pdf).

Document

Analysis of mental health and substance abuse interventions for American Indian and Alaska Native adolescent populations to identify key intervention factors in reducing mental health disparities.

Authors: Antonio, M., Chung-Do, J.

Date: 2015

[Wellbriety Movement](http://wellbriety.com/) (<http://wellbriety.com/>).

Website

Recovery information for Native Americans pursuing sober lifestyles.

Organization: Wellbriety



[\(/toolkits/substance-abuse/4/population-considerations/adolescents\)](/toolkits/substance-abuse/4/population-considerations/adolescents)



[\(/toolkits/substance-abuse/4/population-considerations/women\)](/toolkits/substance-abuse/4/population-considerations/women)



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- [Substance Abuse in Rural Areas Topic Guide \(/topics/substance-abuse\)](/topics/substance-abuse) – Describes the substance abuse problem in rural areas and discusses what rural healthcare providers and communities can do related to prevention and treatment.
- [Webinar: Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse in Rural Communities \(/webinars/substance-abuse-toolkit\)](/webinars/substance-abuse-toolkit)
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