Alaska’s At Risk Youth (AARY): Who are they, What is Being Done and is it Working?

Reclaiming Our at Risk Youth

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Abstract

The population of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Youth is a population “at risk”. The population faces a number of challenges that are threatening what holds the culture together – “The Native Way”, the family and the community. Challenges such as increased suicide rates, substance use, domestic violence and lack of social interest development are a few examples. AI/AN people are fighting to “reclaim their youth.” This project takes a look at the face of the AI/AN at risk youth, presents an overview of the services that are being offered along with their effectiveness and then offers recommendations for a return to the healthy “Native Way” of living.
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Overview of Problem and Project Focus

“It feels like wartime. I’ll see one of our youngsters one day, then find out a couple of days later she’s gone. Our children are self-destructing.” (Diane Garreau, 2012)

According to The Center for Disease Control (2013), over the past decade numbers of at risk youth have increased on a national level. Problems such as youth homicide, teenage substance use, childhood sexual abuse and suicide/self-harm among young have contributed to the increase. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010; Center for Native American Youth, 2011). The Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) population comprises one of the youngest populations in the country and the youth are challenged by a number of the aforementioned problems. For instance, the infant mortality rate among AI/AN is worse than that of corresponding populations in 41 other states (American Fact Finder, US Census Bureau, 2010). Some additional statistics are listed below.

* Binge alcohol use among AN/AI youth is higher (13.8%) than the national average (10.3%). (American Fact Finder, US Census Bureau, 2010)

* Heavy alcohol use is higher (3.8%) than the national average (2.5%). (American Fact Finder, US Census Bureau, 2010)

* Driving under the influence of illicit drugs or alcohol in 2013 was at 10 percent almost equal to the national average. (American Fact Finder, US Census Bureau, 2010)

* Use of cigarettes in 2013 was more than twice as high (27.2%) as the national average (13.4%). (American Fact Finder, US Census Bureau, 2010)
ALASKA’S AT RISK YOUTH

* Getting into at least one serious fight at school or work in the past year was higher (22.1%) than the national average (19.9%). (American Fact Finder, US Census Bureau, 2010)

* Taking part in at least one group-against-group fight in the 2013 was higher (22.4%) than the national average (16.1%). (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; CDC, 2012)

* Suicide is the second leading cause of death for (AI/AN) youth in the 15-24 age group; currently the suicide rate is 2.5 times higher for AI/AN people for any other race in the United States (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 1999).

* 19% of AI/AN high school youth had seriously considered suicide during the preceding year which is down from 29 % in 2006. (Shaughnessy, Branum & Everett-Jones, 2001)

* National studies show homicide is the third leading cause of death for AI/AN (ages 15-24); the homicide rate among American Indians is 1.2 times that of the general U.S. population (USDHHS, 1999).

The younger generation of Alaskan youth should be seen as a historically and chronically at-risk population - deprived protective layers of healthy family traditions and their native community. This among other factors places the population at significant psychological, social, occupational, and other risks. Numerous studies and research projects have provided evidence that families with strong traditional values positively impact the academic success of Alaskan at risk youth and students (Borowsky, Resnick, Ireland & Blum, 1999). Unfortunately, for numerous Alaskan at risk families, the disruption in the intergenerational passing on of traditional culture imposed by the Indian boarding school era, which separated? generations of Alaskan at risk children from their tribal and familial environments, continues to have negative
effects today. Numerous Alaskan women missed out on role models for bonding, nurturing and child-rearing as a result.

Recent data about Alaskan at risk drop-out rates is in short demand however national studies from a decade ago indicated that Alaskan at risk student rates were higher than other groups in America (Hillabrant, Romano, Stang, & Charleston, 1991; Swisher & Hoisch, 1992). It is important to look beyond the youth themselves and examine the problems that are causing youth to drop out of school as well as the conditions in the schools they attend. Dermert (2001) reports that students who drop out cite several school-related problems: unstable home environments, failure or inability to get along with teachers, dislike of school, peer to peer conflict, boredom, feelings of inferiority or not belonging, and suspension.

Many Alaskan at risk youth reside in communities that continue to deal with long-term economic and social distress. Soring rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic abuse, child neglect, substandard housing, and lack of job opportunities are common conditions in Alaskan communities. Acts of aggression and violence on Indian reservations are often viewed as commonplace. The dimensions of this phenomenon are described in a recent Department of Justice study, "American Indians and Crime" (Greenfield & Smith, 1999; Hawkins, Cummins & Marlatt, 2004), which reported that the rate of violence in Indian Country is well above that for all other ethnic groups and more than twice the national average.

Furthermore unemployment, which is often linked to increased levels of crime and substance abuse, is elevated in Alaskan communities, ranging up to 85% on some reservations (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1999). Nearly a third (31.6%) of Alaskan people live below the poverty level, compared to 13.1% of the general population (USDHHS, 1999). Apple (1996) refers to situations of increased unemployment and poverty as "a reality of crisis, an
economy that increases the gap between rich and poor" (p. 71) and points out that in poor communities, schools are poorer and less able to motivate students and their parents.

So what can be done? In almost thirty years of research for the best methods to offer prevention and early intervention services to youth and families, targeting the aforementioned areas a number of key issues have been identified. For example environmental and educational strategies help communities take an active role in addressing local issues like substance use and enhancing smaller communities. Also identified was that culturally appropriate services promote greater success within the population as they incorporate traditional cultural values. Further identified was the importance of highlighting a youth’s community risk and protective factors so the “resiliency model”, which builds upon natural supports, positive life skills and experiences, could be used to help youth succeed despite growing up in a high-risk family or environment (Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, 2013; Lowe, 2013; Sue & Sue, 2005).

Despite efforts such as the aforementioned ones according, to a Hummingbird survey (2011), the suicide rate for this population is at least 3.5 times the national average and high school dropout rates double the national average (The Civil Rights Project, 2010). The three areas identified as being directly affected are family, school/academic achievement and community wellness. In these three areas and with the lack of comprehensible action research, the publically available statistics and existing research data on drug use, violence and mental illness are troubling.

This project was designed to examine these issues along with the services being offered, their effectiveness then provide suggestions on what strategies will address these issues. This project probes some of the problem areas presented above and examines their foundation and impact on the AI/AN youth population based on a survey conducted among service providers in
Anchorage, Alaska in 2014. The project presents an overview of the scope and the effectiveness of services offered addressing the major social and psychological challenges faced by this population. The study concludes with recommendations for service providers, including those based on an Adlerian perspective. Finally, the project describes a new initiative – an ongoing monthly “Citywide (Anchorage) Youth Provider’s Conference (ACYPC) which was birthed as a result of the aforementioned Brewington (2014) survey.

Brewington, “Alaska at Risk Youth” (2013) Study

Study Design and Other general Characteristics

This research will involve study of existing publicly available documents (or services funded through local and state public funds). The second set of data will involve professional interviews with service providers concerning services for Alaska youth. Both sources will not involve any identifiable information directly or through identifiers linked to the participants. The project examined the current problems experienced by at risk youth in Alaska and solutions to these problems based on available research, publically available data and through the eyes of several local providers.

The research addressed immediate problems faced by the Alaska at Risk youth and systemic problems experienced by those providing services for that population, with an aim to not only examine challenges but to identify solutions, with help of those who are directly involved in provision of services. The study would then take the data collected and use it to provide recommendation as to what strategies will address the challenges faced by Alaska’s at Risk Youth. The purpose of the study was to identify an optimal model of mental health care and social services for at risk youth in Alaska.
The study utilized a custom-built survey that was distributed through Survey Monkey to Alaska service providers employed by or otherwise connected with Southcentral Foundation, Covenant House of Alaska, The Arc of Anchorage, Denali Family Services, Alaska Youth Military Academy, Fairview Recreation Center, Mountain View Recreation Center, Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation, McLaughlin Youth Center and Alaska Office of Children’s Services from December 2013 to February 2014. The study was approved by the Adler Graduate School Institutional Review Board (IRB). All participants volunteered their input, and no monetary incentives were provided. All responses were anonymous, and no personal data were collected in a course of the study. In addition, participants were repeatedly reminded that the survey was seeking their general professional opinion about a population of Alaskan at risk youth and not about any specific individual. Participants were recruited via e-mail solicitation, per solicitation script approved by the IRB.

The study used Likert scale in seeking participant level of agreeableness with three statements on a scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The statements were the following:

1. Alaska’s at Risk youth place a strong emphasis on family connection.
2. Alaska’s at Risk youth place a strong emphasis on cultural connection.
3. Alaska’s at Risk youth place a strong emphasis on community connection.

Additionally, the following were the statements seeking responses on a True-False scale:

4. Alaska’s at Risk Youth are better off today than they were 10 years ago
5. Alaska’s at Risk Youth face challenges that are comparable to youth nationally
6. Alaska’s at Risk youth are receiving the necessary tools to be successful in the present days economy
Finally, the following open-ended questions were offered:

7. What do you think are the top three problems facing Alaska’s At Risk youth today?

8. What do you think needs to be done to provide support for the problems identified in this survey (if any)?

9. What services do State/Local programs need to provide in order to address the problems identified in question 7

**Definition of Key Terms**

1. **Adlerian Psychology** - Classical Adlerian psychology is the system of psychology set up and developed by Alfred Adler under the title of Individual Psychology after his break with Sigmund Freud. It is also a contemporary Adlerian movement claiming to preserve the genuine values of Adler's work in the present age. (Griffith & Powers, 2007; Watts & Maniaci, 2006)

2. **At Risk Youth** - For the purpose of this project the term at Risk Youth is used to describe Alaska Native American Indian (AI/AN) teenagers and young adults dealing with long-term consequences of economic and social distress, while missing traditional community and familial support. (Brewington, 2013)

3. **Anchorage Citywide Youth Provider’s Conference (ACYPC)** – A monthly conference that takes place in the city where local providers come together to discuss the effectiveness of services being offered.

4. **Creative Power or Energy (Schopferischekraft)** - Taking something already created and working with or transforming it. (Dischler & Reardon, 2014; Griffith & Powers, 2007; Watts & Maniaci, 2006)
5. Inferiority feelings – These feelings begin in childhood and continue to crop up now and then throughout adulthood. They occur when someone does better than you, criticizes you, shows authority over you, hurts you, or otherwise gains advantage over you. Inferiority feelings are normal and even beneficial, because they lead to a compensating drive to become superior or improve yourself to avoid such feelings in the future. (Watts & Maniacci, 2006)

6. Life Style (Lebensform) - Positive and made up of constructive energy. (Dischler & Reardon, 2014)

7. Social Interest/Community Feeling (Gemeinschaftsgefühl) – A person’s feelings of being at “Oneness” with the community in which they live and humankind. (Dischler & Reardon, 2014; Griffith & Powers, 2007)

8. Soul Life (Szelenleben) – Life filled with soul or “soul life”

9. Striving for Significance (Geltungstreben) - Aiming at validity rather than a feeling of importance. (Dischler & Reardon, 2014; Griffith & Powers, 2007)

There were 25 sets of valid responses for this study.

The following is an overview of responses (Tables 1, 2, & 3). More can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 1. Perceived Emphasis (degree of agreeableness)

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Table 2. Perceived chronological/geographical differences and quality of help

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Table 3. Responses to open-ended questions

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<td>Question 8</td>
<td>24 (96%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 9</td>
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</table>

**Alaska At Risk Youth - Who are They?**

“A population that does not take care of the elderly and of children and the young has no future, because it abuses both its memory and its promise.” — Pope Francis

**National Data**

It is almost fifty years since President Lyndon Johnson declared a war on the problems that plague the youth of our country. However the country is still an unfair playing field for millions of children and young people subjected to preventable poverty, hunger, homelessness, sickness, poor education and violence in the richest country in the world (Eldelman, 2014). In the US every fifth child (16.1 million) is poor, and every tenth child (7.1 million) is extremely poor (CLASP, 2013). Children comprise the poorest age group and the younger they are the poorer they are. Every fourth infant, toddler and preschool child (5 million) is poor; 1 in 8 is
extremely poor. A majority of our one- and two-year-olds are children of color. In five years children of color who are disproportionately poor, nearly 1 in 3, will be a majority of all children in America and of our future workforce, military and consumers. But millions of them are unready for school, poorly educated and unprepared to face the future. Nearly 60 percent of all American children (more than 80 percent of Black children and nearly 75 percent of Latino children in the US) cannot read or compute at grade level in fourth and eighth grade and so many drop out of school before graduating (CLASP, 2013). Seventy-five percent of young people ages 17 to 24 cannot get into the military because of illiteracy, poor health or history of incarceration (Christeson, Dawson & Messner-Zidell, 2013).

The State of Alaska presents a mirror of that reality. A recent report titled “The State of America’s Children” (Eldelman, 2014) estimated that there were over 200,000 children in the State of Alaska. Of this number the report identified some 25,000 as being at risk.

Today, 5.2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) live in the United States—making up 1.7 percent of the total population. The AI/AN population is young, with 31.6 percent under the age of 18, compared with 24 percent of the total population (American Fact Finder 2010 Census). There are alarming statistics on AI/AN youth in almost every risk area:

- American Indian children have the third highest rate of victimization at 11.6 per 1,000 children of the same race or ethnicity. In 2009, 7,335 AI/AN children were victims of child maltreatment (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010).

- American Indian/Alaska Natives have the highest rate of poverty of any other racial group in the nation. In 2009, data tells us that the poverty rate of AI/AN
alone peoples was 27.3%, almost twice the national poverty rate of 14.2. (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2009).

- In 2006, suicide was the leading cause of death for AI/AN males ages 10-14. For AI/AN young adults ages 15 to 24, one-fifth of them died by suicide in that same year. (Centers for Disease Control, 2010)

- A 2006 study found that, compared to other groups, AI/AN youth have more serious problems with mental health disorders. Specifically, AI/AN youth have higher rates of anxiety, substance abuse, and depression. (Olson & Wahab, 2006)

- Alcohol-use disorders were more likely among American Indian youths than other racial groups. In 2007, 8.5% of all AI/AN youth were struggling with an alcohol use disorder compared to 5.8% of the general use population. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, 2001)

- The AI/AN youth population is more affected by gang involvement than any other racial population. 15% of AI/AN youth are involved with gangs compared to 8% of Latino youth and 6% of African American youth nationally. (Glesmann, Krisberg, & Marchionna, 2009).

Many AI/AN youth reside in communities that continue to deal with long-term economic and social distress. Soaring rates of alcoholism, drug use, domestic abuse, child neglect, substandard housing, and lack of job opportunities are common conditions in AI/AN communities. Acts of aggression and violence on Indian reservations and in rural communities are often viewed as commonplace. The dimensions of this phenomenon are described in a recent Department of Justice study, "American Indians and Crime" (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Bockern,
2002), which reported the rate of violence in “Indian Country” is well above that for all other ethnic groups and more than twice the national average.

Furthermore unemployment, which is often linked to increased levels of crime and substance use, is elevated in AI/AN communities, ranging up to 85% on some reservations (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1999). Nearly a third (31.6%) of AI/AN people live below the poverty level, compared to 13.1% of the general population (USDHHS, 1999). Apple (1996) refers to situations of increased unemployment and poverty as "a reality of crisis, an economy that increases the gap between rich and poor" (p. 71) and points out that in poor communities, schools are poorer and less able to motivate students and their parents.

**Suicide Prevention**

“I lost my cousin to suicide a month ago and I want to know how I can help prevent that in the future. I need to know how to help a person who is thinking about ending their life.” – Student from Alaska roundtable.

AI/AN youth have the highest suicide rate of any population in the United States. According to Hummingbird (2011) the rate is at least 3.5 times the national average. The historically higher suicide rate among Native Americans is not fully understood, but proposed risk factors include low social integration, access to firearms, and alcohol or drug use. (Gould, Greenberg, Velting & Shaffer, 2003; Gary, Baker & Grandbois, 2005) During the Brewington survey (2014) and the Anchorage Citywide Youth Providers Conference (2014) local providers reported being routinely involved with youth who knew someone in their family or community who had taken their own life. The providers further reported that many youth did not know where or how to obtain support if they themselves or a friend/peer was contemplating ending their life. Promising practices exist for the AI/AN youth such as suicide prevention trainings; yet,
youth seem especially interested in knowing how they can help their friends and safely refer peers to mental health services.

Over the last decade, suicide rates have reached epidemic proportions in some tribal communities which lack suicide prevention resources – including information about trainings, national prevention help hotlines and local initiatives. Youth report they want to be involved in conversations surrounding suicide prevention and they are interested in peer-to-peer trainings and other resources. (Brotherson & Anderson, 2006; Gould, Greenberg, Velting & Shaffer, 2003) Often youth know their peers are in trouble, want to but don’t know how to help.

**Education**

Just 13.3 percent of Native Americans have undergraduate degrees, versus 24.4 percent of the general population (Graduate Management Admission, 2008). Recent data about AI/AN drop-out rates is in short demand however national studies from a decade ago indicated that AI/AN student rates were higher than other groups in America (Hillabrant, Romano, Stang, & Charleston, 1991; Reyhner, 1992). It is important to look beyond the youth themselves and examine the problems that are causing youth to drop out of school as well as the conditions in the schools they attend. Bowker (1993) reports that students who drop out cite several school-related problems: unstable home environments, failure or inability to get along with teachers, dislike of school, peer to peer conflict, boredom, feelings of inferiority or not belonging, and suspension.

Educational success has been a challenge for AI/AN youth, their families and communities since the time of statehood. During the Brewington survey (2013) as well as the Citywide Youth Provider Conference (2014) providers report feedback from youth to better understand how AI/AN youth have had to overcome numerous barriers that prevent academic
achievements. Youth report that subjects taught in the traditional classroom are “culturally irrelevant.” Students also report challenges such as language barriers and teachers/mentors that do not understand the “Native Way” of life.

An increasing number of AI/AN youth are failing to further their education after high school. College preparation for AI/AN youth often lacks information about college support services to help with the transition into a new environment. In addition to the lack of support services, youth also report the lack family involvement in college activities to foster healthy transitions for new students. They also expressed the lack of family engagement in their educational journey as well as the need for schools to support family engagement to help strengthen the support system for students away from home.

In addition to improved reinforcement needs, a large number of youth are dropping out of school. AI/AN youth report that the motivation to stay focused on academic achievement was hard to maintain when many of their peers and friends make the decision to withdraw from school. The Journal of American Indian Education reported that high school dropout rates for AI/AN youth are double the national average, over 50 percent in states with the highest AI/AN populations and the Pacific Northwest (The Civil Rights Project, 2010).

**Community**

“In my village there is a lot of teen pregnancy, sexual abuse, substance abuse, and lack of law enforcement. We get frustrated with adults having meetings and doing things.” – Student from roundtable Voices of Native Youth Report, 2011

AI/AN youth face many challenges in the community such as substance abuse, child sexual abuse, unstable home environments, domestic violence and often struggle for identity and a voice. Many young people from AI/AN communities say they see alcohol and drug use among
their family and friends every day. Many report either being victims or knowing a peer who was a victim of some type of childhood abuse. During the Citywide Youth Conference a youth reported “It is difficult to refrain from substance abuse with constant peer pressure and easy access to drugs and alcohol in the community. I learned how to cook dope before I knew how to do Algebra.” Many reported being victims of or witnessing domestic violence in the home. Many reported growing up in home environments where substances were abused, one or more parents were absent from the home or someone in the home was experiencing mental health issues to include self-harm. They report a lack of age appropriate, fun and engaging activities in their communities often leaving them bored leading to maladaptive behaviors. They report the lack of support for agencies such as Boys and Girls Clubs, community recreation centers and after school activities as being especially problematic.

The youth described communities comprised of families, tribal leaders, programs and schools, all of which play a part in a support system that helps nurture their growth and development. They seemed proud of their tribal ancestry and eager to be involved in the strong traditions and culture; however, they seemed frustrated that they were “not being heard.” Youth report that their cries for help often led to adults “having another meeting” to talk about the problem instead of implementing changes. During a small group discussion in Minneapolis, youth shared that although their community nurtures spirituality through churches and cultural traditions; they far too often see depression, unemployment and attest that drugs and alcohol are still prevalent in their hometowns.

During a research visit to Scamming Bay, Alaska a village of about 1000 people located in the Lower Kuskokwim area youth described their communities by adding that many of their facility structures are older buildings and that there is a lack of transportation for community
members to travel to and from other towns. As far as existing opportunities available to youth, many young participants talked about having recreational centers for traditional dances, afterschool event and church-led activities but reported a lack of organization and resources within these opportunities. (Brewington, 2013)

In an urban setting such as Anchorage youth talked about concerns that there are high rates of homelessness amongst their peers. Young urban Natives feel upset seeing Native Americans homeless, holding a sign asking for money at intersections, sitting on the side of the streets, and hitchhiking from one location to another. These Native youth are interested in getting involved with volunteerism to help individuals who have found themselves on the streets and in unfortunate circumstances.

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health**

Both substance abuse and mental health problems have had devastating effects on the health and well-being of American Indians and Alaska Natives. (Hawkins, Cummins & Marlatt, 2004) Many AN/AI youth reported trying substances as early as 8 or 9 years old. Many youth report using substances or being offered substances by parents or family members while growing up. Many youth report growing up in villages or smaller communities where alcohol is illegal to sold, used or processed. They report that because of this its puts an almost “treasured” effect on the substance leading to importation (often a federal charge) and smuggling issues as well as “black market” prices.

Although alcohol is the primary drug of abuse among the population there are also major concerns among other drugs of abuse such as cannabis, opiates and synthetic substances such as spice and bath salts. Research has shown an increase in all these substances amongst AI/AN youth in rural communities as well as major cities. Youth report initial use as a result of
boredom and peer pressure as well as generational patterns. They further report a lack of or inadequate services to address substance abuse problems in terms of providing early intervention support or long term interventions to these problems.

During both the ACYPC and the Brewington Survey youth shared that if they are not spending time with family or “sitting at home” they are with friends who are partying, fighting and drinking on the weekends. They said that the biggest challenge they face is the temptation to get involved with drugs and alcohol. Youth report knowing that these substances are harmful and can hinder achievements but peer pressure and easy access make abstinence difficult.

There is also a concern with the growing number of youth that are suffering from mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, hyperactivity disorders and Alaska is one of the leading states in the country for instances of children born with fetal alcohol complications. These problems are often complicated by the lack of treatment or resistance to Western treatment approaches and methods.

Providers Insight: Beyond the Numbers: Brewington “Alaska at Risk Youth” Study (2013)

The face of Alaska’s at Risk Youth is changing according to provider responses from the Brewington survey (2013). Although the vast majority of the providers surveyed strongly agreed that the population is better off than it was 10 years ago the majority of the providers felt the youth lacked the tools to cope with current challenges. Survey results seem to paint a picture of a young person struggling for identity, belonging and understanding. Survey results seemed to paint a picture of a youth struggling with cultural awareness, substance use, childhood poverty and community involvement. Survey results seemed to paint a picture of a youth attempting to balance holding on to their “Indian-ness” yet developing the skills to cope with the “outside”
world. According to Griner & Smith (2006) there is a pressing need to enhance the availability and quality of social services provided to persons from historically disadvantaged racial and ethnic groups such as this one. They go on to advocate that traditional social services be modified to better match clients' cultural contexts.

This insight was echoed by Matt S who shared in the September 2013 Community-wide Youth Providers conference. Matt S shared while growing up he felt ashamed to be Alaska Native and did all he could to disconnect with his culture. He went on to share, “but now the cultural connection and working in Native community is what has helped me get out of and stay out of the addictive lifestyle. Now as a provider I see the same thing with the majority of the at-risk youth I work with. However I also see the transformation that happens once they embrace and accept who they are.” Matt says it provides balance, belonging and identity which is what they are missing in their lives.

**AARY What Being Done?**

Another perspective that arose from this research that warrants discussing is rather than specifically indicating what children are at risk of, the phrase is often used vaguely to refer to poor life outcomes in general. Moore (2006) states when outcomes for children are mentioned, there is the temptation to refer to very vague, long-term deficits, such as lack of educational progress, grief and loss, economic dependency, or juvenile incarceration. However effective programs in the community are likely to have more specific goals for “at-risk” children, such as improving grades in school, delaying sexual initiation, or developing conflict resolution skills. Moore goes on to ascertain any given program is likely to have just one or two specific targets; such as seeking to improve arts performance, sports competence, academic skills and test scores, and to encourage volunteering.
Still, different program and providers are likely to have quite different outcomes in mind when they think a child is “at risk” of a poor outcome. However the common thread is to provide services that build on a youth’s individual strengths while developing skills necessary to be productive community members. This point was emphasized and illustrated during September’s ACYP (September, 2014) by Jennifer O’Neal of Denali Family Services (DFS) when she discussed the importance of keeping interventions fun and engaging for the youth being served. Ms. O’Neal went on to discuss how important it was to build on youth’s strengths while getting them involved in the defining treatment goals. Some other programs that meet these criteria are listed below.

**Boys and Girls Club of Alaska**

The Boys and Girls Club of Alaska was started in 1966 and strive to help kids reach their full potential by offering them hope, opportunity and a safe environment (http://www.bgcalaska.org/). There are clubs in over 32 communities in Alaska that offer services that target academic success, character/leadership development and healthy lifestyle development. One Club combination recreation center that warrants signaling out is located in a neighborhood known as Mountain View. Mountain View is home to a lot of the City’s low socioeconomic children and families. The club is currently managed by Dave Burney who along with his staff provides a safe and nurturing environment these youth do not receive at home.

**Covenant House Alaska**

Since opening their doors in 1988, Covenant House Alaska (CHA) has served thousands of homeless, at-risk, and trafficked youth in the State. CHA focuses on being available to help youth in crisis “24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.” Some services provided include Emergency Shelter, Street Outreach, Transitional Living Programs, supportive housing
services, health care services, youth enrichment programs, pastoral ministry and employment/education assistance. CHA strives to meet the basic needs of youth in crisis, while also providing them with the support to become healthy, self-sufficient, contributing members of our community. According to a case manager with the Independent Living Program “the youth’s immediate needs (i.e. clothing, food, and shelter) will be addressed before any type of administrative/paperwork needs are done. Oh we will talk about why a youth is showing up at our facility but first we get them feed and in clean clothes.” (ACYPC, September 2013)

Local Public and Charter Schools

There are approximately 50 local/area school districts in Alaska. The districts are overseen by Department of Education and offer services at the elementary, middle and high school level. The districts also offer a wide range of extra-curricular and student support services. There are also a number of charter and boarding schools in the state. These schools tend to focus on traditional and cultural integration while striving to meet basic educational requirements and standards.

Southcentral Foundation

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) is an Alaska Native-owned, nonprofit health care organization serving nearly 60,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people living in Anchorage, Matanuska-Susitna Valley, and 60 rural villages in the Anchorage Service Unit. Incorporated in 1982 under the tribal authority of Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI), Southcentral Foundation is the largest of the CIRI nonprofits, employing more than 1,400 people in some 65 programs. SCF provides voluntary, comprehensive, individualized mental health programs for adolescents from 13 to 18 years old. Its mission is to create a loving and supportive community environment where Alaska Native children can develop into independent, service-minded and
productive leaders. Once in the program, SCF’s team of clinicians and employees help youth improve their mental and behavioral health, physical and spiritual wellness, and academic and/or vocational skills. Through a combination of individual, group and educational settings, youth learn healthier methods of managing their behavior, handling conflict and anger, progressing in their recovery and improving relationships with family members.

**The Arc of Anchorage**

The Arc of Anchorage helps Alaskans, who experience intellectual, developmental disabilities, or mental illness achieve lives of dignity and independence as valued members of the community. They offer a full array of services for youth and their families, from behavioral health services, to care coordination, to community living services, to nursing and recreational services. The organization also provides information about the services available and connects youth with the resources they need. Also helps families find funding and support during crises and emergencies.

**Office of Children’s Services**

The Office of Children’s Services (OCS) works in partnership with families and communities to support the well-being of Alaska’s children and youth. Services aim to enhance families’ capacities to provide a healthy start, provide safe and permanent homes, establish/develop cultural connections and realize their potential. OCS strives to build on the strengths of the past, while exploring new opportunities and goals for the future. Since its reorganization on July 1, 2003, OCS continues to work to coordinate its three core programs for supporting children:

- Youth and families which are Infant Learning Program
- Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning
Child Protection and Permanency

**Division of Juvenile Justice**

The Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) oversees eight youth facilities around The State of Alaska. Each facility provides:

- Secure facilities for youth awaiting determination of the outcomes relating to their offenses.
- Highly structured core services such as short-term individual, group, and family counseling.
- Education services through local school districts.
- Health screening and medical care.
- Mental health diagnostics and services.
- Substance abuse education and prevention.
- Life-skills competency building.

**Kids Kitchen**

Asleep in his Anchorage apartment, Elgin Jones heard a loud voice say, "Feed the children!" Most folks would have rolled over and forgotten all about it by morning, but for Jones, the August 1996 dream was truly a wake-up call. Within 2 weeks, the childless retired newspaper editor had contacted a recreation center in the poorest part of town and started cooking nutritious free meals for children funded out of his own pocket. Kids' Kitchen, a nonprofit that grew out of this vision, is based in Anchorage and dedicated to providing nutritional meals for children at no cost. With over a million meals “served with love” since 1996, Kids' Kitchen is starting to see the first children they served grow into young, dynamic adults. According to Grand Pa Elgin, “Love works for our community, our nation, and our world.”
Denali Family Services

Denali Family Services (DFS serves children who require intensive behavioral health care services, and their families. Denali Family Services offers individual, family and group psychotherapy services in combination with intensive care coordination and rehabilitative services. DFS targets children who experience mental illnesses serving an average of 200 consumers each month in Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley areas. DFS also maintains an active foster care program, licensed treatment foster homes and works with local and Lower 48 providers to ensure continuity of care and work at family reunification.

Volunteers of America (V.O.A)

Volunteers of America Alaska provides treatment services and assistance to over 600 adolescents and their families. Volunteers of America Alaska's treatment services provides tools for chemically dependent and substance abusing adolescents to build strong and healthy futures. Through treatment, adolescents learn the skills needed to eliminate their reliance on drugs or alcohol. VOA programs are fully accredited treatment facilities designed to help youth rebuild their lives. The programs offer treatment as well as support to both teens and their families. Services include counseling with a family therapist and group sessions for parents of teens in the programs. VOA programs aim to provide “support for youth and help for struggling families.”

Alaska Youth Military Academy

The Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA) is a division of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. AMYA operates cycles that start on or about April 1st and October 1st. The Alaska Military Youth Academy's ChalleNGe Program is designed to meet the life coping skills and educational needs of 16 to 18 year old Alaskans. The Youth ChalleNGe program is a 22-week residential school based on the traditional military training model. Located
on Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, AMYA provides Cadets (as the program youth are known) instruction in the following areas: Life Coping Skills, Academic Excellence, Job Skills, Responsible Citizenship, Leadership/Followership, Health & Hygiene, Physical Fitness, and Service to the Community. Additionally, cadets work toward the completion of a GED or High School Diploma. AMYA is also has a certified Archery and a national partner with the Boys and Girls Club of America.

**Alaska Job Corps**

Job Corps is a no-cost education and career technical training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young men and women ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through career technical and academic training. The Job Corps program is authorized by Title I-C of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The Alaska Job Corps Center embodies the National Job Corps program's mission of teaching eligible young men and women the skills they need to become employable, independent and to place them in meaningful jobs or further education.

**Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation**

The Alaska Youth and Parent Foundation (AYPF) is a non-profit agency dedicated to serving the needs of runaway and homeless adolescents and their families. AYPF’s Peer Outreach Workers, Education and Referral (POWER) program offers training to teens providing them with the skills to do street outreach, conduct prevention- based presentations to their peers and staff the free downtown POWER Teen Clinic. The clinic is run by teens for teens with a public health nurse there to help. All services are free to teens (13-19 years old). AYPF offers free birth control, pregnancy tests, and HIV as well as STD testing. They also provide free food and drinks to teens.
**Nine Star Enterprises**

Nine Star Enterprises offers education and employment services to help young Alaskans obtain high school diplomas/GED and career development. What is now known as Nine Star Enterprises, Inc. (dba Nine Star Education & Employment Services) was founded in 1976 as a broad-based training institution. Its first offices were located on the campus of the Alaska Pacific University. In December of 1994, Nine Star completed the final paperwork to take possession of its own building in downtown Anchorage at 125 West Fifth Avenue. In recent years, Nine Star has established offices at seven sites throughout the Southeast Alaska—Mountain View, Midtown, four offices downtown Anchorage, and the newest outreach in Wasilla. Nine Star has grown into the fabric of Alaska, offering academic training and employment support to thousands of clients.

**Alaska Youth Advocates (AYA)**

AYA’s mission is to advocate and foster the wellbeing of at risk youth so they may lead productive lives. The organization offers the chance for a healthier life to young people who face challenges such as lack of family support, lack of education, substance abuse or addiction, and homelessness. Through their POWER Teen Center and Health Clinic in downtown Anchorage, AYA reaches out to youth, offering a caring environment and information that can help them make good decisions in their lives. AYA also offers the opportunity for young people who have overcome their own challenges the opportunity to learn how to help others by becoming peer counselors. AYA forms partnerships with other organizations to increase the opportunity of success for youth.
Beyond the Data. Brewington “Alaska At Risk Youth” (2013) study: Provider Insight

“I grew up in the Alaska foster care system and know what it is like. That is why I am a foster parent and do all I can to help. The fact that someone did it for me saved my life.” Laura Ingram, September 2014 Youth Providers Conference

The problems facing this population are vast and run deep and are far too vast and deeply rooted for one agency to address. Survey results seemed to agree and identify collaboration as one of the keys to supporting this population. Of the people who responded to the Brewington survey over 50% of them agreed that collaboration and community connection were vital to service enhancement. Respondents agreed that Alaska Native Youth faced challenges comparable to youth nationally and “we need to listen to what the youth are saying they need along with increased community involvement.” One provider shared “we need safe places such as youth centers that are easily accessible by bus where youth can learn life skills, vocational skills, get help with homework and have safe recreational activities.” Providers sited the lack of collaboration and community involvement as reasons for some of the challenges with this population.

During the August ACYP (2014), Dorena Bingham, the manager for Fairview Recreation Center, talked about the center’s use of other organizations to help promote their mission. She shared that when organizations such as Kids Kitchen (which is located in the center), Campfire Kids and volunteers get involved it provides resources that do not have to come out of the center’s budget. She went on to say that budgeting and funding are major problems for the center however the main challenge is getting “parent by in” or parental involvement.
Another area that was identified as important to the development of this population was parental and community involvement. The Brewington survey targeted these areas on questions 5 – 7 and of the 25 people who responded 76 % felt these youth were not receiving the services they needed to be successful. During follow up discussions providers seemed to think the lack of community connection, cultural identity and family involvement were lacking. Sue and Sue (2000) talked about this perspective in terms of AN/AI cultures using mediums such as drumming, dancing and talking circles as means of teaching and preservation yet westerners often forbid these activates viewing them as witchcraft.

This perspective was also echoed by Jennifer O’Neal of Denali Family Services (DFS) who sites parental involvement and youth empowerment as the primary areas needing addressing with this population. Ms. O’Neal discussed DFS’s use of the Transition to Independence Program (TIP) model which targets strategies such as educating youth on choice management and parents/providers on strategies aimed as empowering youth while building on the youth’s strengths. She went on to discuss the TIP model uses “transition facilitators (TFs)” who are trained in case management but also understand that as young people approach adulthood it’s important develop decision making skills. She further explains TFs are highly trained and educated professionals who work with small caseloads until they partner a youth with a peer support specialist. Peer support specialists are youth who have successfully completed or are on track to successfully complete the program. She explains the “power of a youth who has been there; done that, helping another youth who is trying to get there is really powerful.” This perspective was echoed by Cherri McAdams of Volunteers of America who explains her agency also uses the TIP model. She went on to share the youth in her program share that when they serve as a peer support it strengthens their own recovery and provides a sense of belonging.
Youth empowerment was identified by another guest speaker at the provider’s conference from Anchorage Police Department (APD). Lt. Fannick of APD shared that over his span of some 2 decades with the force peer pressure and poor decision making skills are the main reasons youth get into trouble. He went on to explain youth just are not taught how to say “no” and often go along with plans to feel like they belong. However he explains, “I have seen youth make some incredible comebacks with the right support.”

Min. J. Harris who serves at a local church agrees and adds “out of my 20 years in the field I have learned that when you empower a young person to feel that they are important it translates into healthy choices.” Dave Burney of Mt. View Boys and Girls Club, which is located in Mt View a low socioeconomic area, shared he has seen the same trend. Most of the youth he deals with lack the positive role models and suffer from low self-esteem. Dave went on to share “I have been working at this club for about 10 years and with at risk youth much longer than that. The main thing I see with the young people I work with is how impressionable they are. They need to see people doing the right thing. They need to be cared for unconditionally and treated with dignity and respect. When they are they usually model it.”

AARY – Is It Working?

“I get really frustrated waiting for help because it seems adults just want to have meetings and talk about getting things done while nothing gets done. Matt Stevens August ACYPC

What do the Numbers Say?

Statistics over the last year show marked decreases or no marked increases in several key “at risk” areas among AI/AN youth. For example the Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) conducted in 2013 shows the number of AI/AN youth who were current drinkers, current cigarette smokers, attempted suicide, were sexually active or reported depressive
symptoms decreased or stayed the same. (Center for Disease Control YRBS Survey, 2013)

Similarly numbers from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on this population shows decreases in the number of homicides, sexual assaults as well as the reported instances of teen pregnancies. (CDC, 2010) Additional research also shows decreased numbers associated with successful suicide attempts, juvenile arrests, juvenile violent crimes and the number of reported school dropouts. (Department of Health and Human Services, 2001)

**Beyond the Numbers! Brewington “Alaska at Risk Youth” (2013) study: Providers Insight**

When a group of area providers were surveyed (Brewington, 2013; ACYPC, 2014) about the state of the AI/AN youth served along with the effectiveness of services offered, there seemed to be a different opinion. This opinion was echoed in a study by Martin and Melendez in conjunction with the Convent House Alaska Crisis Center (2010) where in both instances it was reported that the number of youth in crisis is increasing. The largest increases are in youth coming from out-of-state and from remote rural Alaska. Some specifics from the survey along with the Martin/Melendez project are detailed below:

- AI/AN youth seem to lack in cultural connection
- AI/AN youth are “worse off today than they were 10 years ago.”
- AI/AN youth are lacking Native Youth Leadership
- Youth want more responsibility by being included in decision-making and developing partnerships with their tribal leaders.
- Native culture is important to youth and they want to share their culture with non-Native members of their community.
- AI/AN make up an increasing share of youth being served by the Covent House Crisis Center.
Up to 40% of AI/AN aging out of foster care ended up at Covent House Crisis Center.

Many AI/AN receiving mental health care outside of the state, return to Alaska and end up at Covent House Crisis Center.

Few AI/AN at Crisis Center have a high school diploma or GED. None coming from rural Alaska have a diploma or GED.

Three out of four AI/AN are unemployed, and among AI/AN coming from outside of Anchorage, 86% are unemployed.

Brewington Survey Numbers, quotes and insights

53% of respondents felt Alaska’s at Risk Youth placed a strong emphasis on family connection.

57% of respondents felt Alaska’s at Risk Youth placed a strong emphasis on cultural connection.

46% of respondents felt Alaska’s at Risk Youth community connection.

64% of respondents felt Alaska’s at risk youth no better off than they were 10 years ago.

50% of respondents felt Alaska’s at Risk youth faced challenges comparable to their national counterparts.

76% felt Alaska’s at risk youth are receiving the necessary tools to be successful in the present day's economy.

What do you think are the top three problems facing Alaska’s at Risk Youth today? The top three cited were substance abuse, family dysfunction and poverty.

What do you think needs to be done to provide support for the problems identified in this survey (if any)? Provider seemed to think the youth needed unconditional support, education and programs that addressed their needs.
Conclusion. Where we go from here and how we “Reclaim Our At Risk Youth”

Before going on a “Reclaim Our at Risk Youth” crusade it seemed only natural to have a closer look at who is actually at risk. Is it the child or adolescent? Is it the family? Or is it the community? Many providers surveyed argued that all children are at risk in some way or another, while others argued that AI/AN encounter much higher risks than do other children. Circumstances such as a disability, low self-esteem, cultural stigmas or abuse issues tend to complicate this issue for this population. One the other hand, numerous providers contended that one should not view children themselves as being at risk, but rather the environments in which children develop. For example, it could be said that the family and its structure that are at risk. Families are a vital setting for the development of AI/AN children, and family risk factors, such as poverty, single parenthood, domestic violence and low parental education levels, regularly have been found to undermine a child’s development. A third approach focused on the community, neighborhood, or school context as an at-risk environment. For example, low-income smaller communities often with high crime rate and a low high school graduation rate might be viewed as a place that puts children and adolescents at risk of poor outcomes.

During the August Citywide Providers Conference (2013) a number of providers identified areas that if addressed would support this population in developing the skills necessary to deal with the challenges faced. Some included:

- Stronger law enforcement and legal structure
- Community Centers that are staffed and that provide fun, engaging opportunities
- Better education in terms of culturally sensitive teachers and curriculums
- Strengthened tribal governments and Native organizations
- More opportunities to share and learn more about their culture
• More training opportunities and additional information about college and vocational schools

• The promotion of Family and Community activities aimed at strengthening Native communities especially villages and rural communities

Finding ways to implement and develop the areas above is no easy task. However it is my belief that many can be addressed through using the concepts of Alfred Adler. Adler believed that the formulation of personality took place in the first 5 or 6 years of life, and that family/community situations formed the classroom for personality development. He surmised that skills such as sharing, caring, problem solving, and anger management are all developed through family and community interaction. The underlying reason is that a young child tries very hard to please parents and avoid feelings of inferiority. (Griffith & Powers, 2002 p 63)

This concept can be seen in the AI/AN communities where activities such as fishing, hunting and subsistence lifestyles are used to emphasize that “the community takes care of its own.” For example, some children see their parents working together to promote the wellbeing of the family/community which can solidify into a sociable style of life. Other children grow up in maladaptive homes where parents are committed to selfish motives which are often passed on to the children. As children grow older the behavior is often repeated until it constitutes a style of life. The result is a so-called spoiled child. (Dreikurs, 1964) Adler proposed that spoiled children are more interested in taking care of themselves than the community. This is what is called lacking in social interest or Gemeinshaftsfefühl. Social interest or taking an interest in the interest of others (“onesmanship”) according to Carlson, Watts and Maniacci (2006) is vital for children to develop “healthy styles of life” and accomplishing life’s tasks.
Drewy (2014) goes on to explain presently the term lifestyle usually refers to one's surroundings and activities, such as where a person lives or the vehicle a person’s drives or golfing on the weekend. To Adler, by contrast, the "style of life or Lebensform (German term)" was a “habitual social orientation,” a specific approach to addressing social situations. For example, an individual will tend to be consistently helpful, exploitative, dishonest, ingratiating...and so on. The style of life tends to be consistent and reflected throughout the person's life and becomes foundational in the younger years.

The final point on Adler’s view on youth development is the spiritual nature of his discipline. Like the American Indian and Alaska Native cultures, Adler psychology emphasizes the “connectedness of mankind and life in general.” Reardon & Dischler, 2013) The German terms he uses for his concepts such as Striving for Significance (Geltungstreben), social interest (Gemeinshaftsfefühl), Soul Life (Szelenleben), and Form of Life (Lebensform) - all have spiritual foundation. Reardon (2014) discusses this concept in a “Presentation of Adlerian Terms” where he is accompanied by Vicki Dischler, Adler Graduate School student and German teacher. In the presentation it is pointed out that the German terms Adler chose tended to be spiritual in nature. Vicki discusses how the terms are anchored in spiritual foundations such as “creation, selflessness and life transformation.” (Reardon & Dischler, 2013)

Another interesting perspective was presented by Brendtro, Brokenleg and Bockern (2002) in their book “Reclaiming Youth at Risk.” They state the “reclaiming” environment is one that meets the needs of both the young person and the community. To reclaim means to recover, redeem or to restore value to something that has been devalued. They propose that among the features of “powerful reclaiming environments” are:
• Experiencing belonging in a supportive community, rather than being lost in a
depersonalized bureaucracy.

• Meeting one’s needs for mastery, rather than enduring inflexible systems designed for the convenience of adults.

• Being involved in determining their own future, while recognizing society need to control harmful behavior

• Expecting youth to be caregivers, not just helpless recipients overly dependent on the core of adults

Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (2002, p. 7) continue on to say that youth are suffering from the “seeds of discouragement.” One of the seeds of discouragement is destructive relationships. Destructive relationships manifest as a child that is experiencing rejection, abandonment and unable to engage in trusting relationships. Another discouraging seed is futility which is seen as insecurity, inadequacy and a fear of failure. Then there is learned irresponsibility. This seed is evidenced by a youth whose sense of powerlessness may be masked by indifference, defiant and even rebellious behavior. Finally there is loss of purpose which is evidenced by a youth who is self-centered and leading a life unsure of his/her values.

Brendtro et al. go on to propose to deal with the seeds of discouragement a youth must find their way into the “circle of courage.” (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2002) The circle has four directions or themes. The number four has sacred meaning to American Indian/Native people as they see a person standing in a circle surrounded by “four directions.” This is the “medicine wheel “philosophy. Belonging, mastery, independence and generosity are the four directions or central values or four unifying themes on the circle for positive youth development.
The spirit of belonging, according to Brentro et al. (2002), entails that the duty of all adults is to serve as teachers, mentors and role models for younger persons. In the Native community child rearing goes beyond the biological parents on to a larger circle of Aunts, Uncles, Elders and Teachers. This concept entails that a child not only belongs to a family but also to the community circle. In other words “where every the child strays they are at home.”

Next in the circle is the spirit of mastery. The spirit of mastery has to do with a child mastering their environments. It is a form of “competence motivation.” It is the purest form of achievement, encouragement and self-actualization. When this need for achievement is satisfied it provides the self-esteem, courage and motivation needed for a child to take on bigger challenges.

Then we come to the spirit of independence. Independence deals with the Native youth embracing meaningful roles in society. Parents and adult figures are guilty of placing youth in positions where they are regarded as pawns without a sense of autonomy. This concept leads to children who feel they lack control of their own behavior and environments – learned helplessness. The Native view is that autonomy must be balanced by continuing social controls. For example the Native youth is taught gun safety and wilderness survival before being allowed to hunt on their own.

Finally there is the spirit of generosity. Native youth are taught at a young age to always share. They are taught that giving away cherished things leads to strength and courage. Giving was and still is a part of many Native ceremonies such as marriages and children still honor elders by bringing them food and gifts.

Before concluding, a quick note to acknowledge the similarities between the “Brentro approach”, Individual Psychology (Alfred Adler) and the Brewington survey (2013). The
provider’s polled in the survey seemed to believe that community was the ultimate classroom. There responses sent the message that youth are having difficulties because they have been taken away from family and community education. This also was a doctrine supported by Adler who taught the community and family were the platforms youth used to establish their styles of life or personality. He believed the construction of personality is completed by age 4 or 5. He believed a child’s interpretation of what life is, what others are and how to relate to others is pretty much fixed by this point (Griffith and Powers, 2007 pg 63) Bentro builds on this perspective when he talks about the role family, community and schools play in “reclaiming our at risk youth.” He states the average Native youth spends approximately 8 at school and these schools can be a source of positive reinforcement and empowerment or a place where youth are made to feel less than and their cultural and spiritual beliefs frowned upon.

**AARY Conclusion**

The American Indian/Alaska Native youth face a number of challenges that are unique to the population. There is no fix all solution for these challenges however both youth and service providers emphasize the need to get back to the “Native Way” of doing things. The Native Way involves youth empowerment, youth being treated with dignity and respect and spiritual awareness. The Native Way involves the community taking care of its own (social interest) and parenting going beyond biological parents to involve the community itself. However, above all else, the Native Way involves overcoming discouragement by implementing the principles of the circle of courage – belonging, mastery, independence and generosity.
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Appendix A

**Question 1 Alaska At-Risk-Youth**

For the purpose of this study, Alaska at Risk Youth is used to describe Indian/Alaska Native teenagers and young adults dealing with long-term consequences of economic and social distress, while missing traditional community and familial support. Please answer the following questions. Please do not share any information concerning individuals in a way that these individuals may be identified. This survey is seeking your general professional opinion about a population of Alaskan at risk youth and not about any specific individual. What services do State/Local programs need to provide in order to address the problems identified in question 7

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Question 2 Alaska At-Risk-Youth

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Question 3

Alaska At-Risk-Youth

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<td>4.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Count</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**answered question** 25

**skipped question** 0

For the purpose of this study, Alaska at Risk Youth is used t
**Question 4 Alaska At-Risk-Youth**

For the purpose of this study, Alaska at Risk Youth is used to describe Indian/Alaska Native teenagers and young adults dealing with long-term consequences of economic and social distress, while missing traditional community and familial support. Please answer the following question. Please do not share any information concerning individuals in a way that these individuals may be identified. This survey is seeking your general professional opinion about a population of Alaskan at risk youth and not about any specific individual. Alaska’s at Risk youth place a strong emphasis on community connection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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</table>

answered question 25

skipped question 0
For the purpose of this study, Alaska at Risk Youth is used to describe Indian/Alaska Native teenagers.
Question 5  Alaska At-Risk-Youth

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*answered question* 25

*skipped question* 0

Alaska’s at Risk Youth are better off today than they were 10 years ago
Question 6  Alaska At-Risk-Youth

Alaska At-Risk-Youth

Alaska’s at Risk Youth face challenges that are comparable to youth nationally

<table>
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answered question 24

skipped question 1

Alaska's at Risk Youth face challenges that are comparable to youth nationally

- True
- False
Question 7  Alaska At-Risk-Youth

Alaska’s at Risk youth are receiving the necessary tools to be successful in the present days economy

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Response Count</th>
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<tr>
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answered question 25

skipped question 0
Question 8 Alaska At-Risk-Youth

Thank you for your contributions! If you have experienced any distress while answering the questions in this survey, please consult with the research supervising team (Dr. Bluvshtein at marina.bluvshtein@alfredadler.edu). If this help seems insufficient or if you feel that this might cause conflict of interests, please seek help with the local crisis connection. If you would like to share about your experience with this survey, please use the textbox below. If not – just finish your survey and submit the results.