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November 2013

Strategic efforts to address methamphetamine in Indian Country



Preface

Since October 2010, Strategic Applications International (SAI) has been working with 40 American Indian Tribes to address methamphetamine use in Indian country. With a grant from the Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), we facilitate summits and provide technical assistance to these tribes. Through this process SAI has learned the scope and depth of the barriers faced by tribal police in combating the scourge of meth in their communities. This BOLO will:

1. Highlight tribal policing challenges and barriers to implementing community oriented policing
2. Present information on what has emerged from the Breaking the Cycle Summit on how to address meth in Indian country
3. Describe a community oriented action planning process
4. Share one community's efforts to focus their planning for maximum impact

About this BOLO

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) present the BOLO series, supporting the publication and dissemination of experiences and implications discovered during ongoing research in the field, with the goal of regularly communicating these resources to the law enforcement community at large. "Be on the lookout" for these field-driven, evidence-based resources that will help illuminate the nature, function, context, costs, and benefits of community policing innovations. For questions about this specific report and technical assistance activities underway, contact:

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74% of Indian

country law enforcement agencies identified methamphetamine as their greatest drug threat.

Background

Methamphetamine has a disproportionate impact on tribal communities; the percent of methamphetamine use among American Indian/Alaskan Native/Native Hawaiians is double that of white, non-American Indians. Seventy-four percent of Indian country law enforcement agencies identified methamphetamine as their greatest drug threat. The FBI estimates that up to 40 percent of violent crime on reservations involves methamphetamine.¹ These numbers place a burden on tribal institutions (criminal justice, public health, treatment, child protection), and overwhelms their capacity to respond.

Policing Barriers

Methamphetamine use in Indian country is a pervasive problem. Meth use leads to an increase in crime and violence, the abuse of women and children, and degrades the quality of life for those that live within tribal communities. Controlling the methamphetamine problem is of the utmost importance for maintaining healthy and safe communities in Indian country. This is a difficult task due to several factors, including geography, legislation that limits criminal jurisdiction in Indian country, and issues with the current state of law enforcement.

Geography

Indian country in the United States is composed of approximately 56 million acres of land owned by over 560 independent sovereign tribal governments and communities. Tribal reservations vary in size from the largest encompassing 16 million acres of land, to many reservations that are less than 1,000 acres. The checkerboard nature of reservations (non-contiguous reservations) has resulted in the further division and separation of Indian country, making it more difficult for law enforcement to maintain safe and healthy communities.²

1. FY2010 Tribal Methamphetamine Initiative (Tribal Meth) Fact Sheet. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, July 2010). www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/fact_sheets/e06107285-TribalMeth-FactSheet_093010.pdf

2. BIA. "Who We Are." U.S. Department of the Interior, www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/index.htm.

Law Enforcement Personnel

According to the 2007 report by The National Congress of American Indians, there is a 42 percent deficit in the number of law enforcement officers needed to properly serve Indian country. Some reservations, which can be the size of a small state, have only two to three officers that rotate shifts every 12 hours. The sheer size of Indian country, as well as the significant lack of officers, is a barrier to effective tribal law enforcement.³

Recruiting and retaining qualified candidates from tribal populations is difficult. Some tribal police departments employ both tribal and nontribal sworn officers to address staffing issues. Nevertheless, high turnover rates exacerbate the problem, as agencies constantly need to train new recruits. High turnover rates also make it difficult to cultivate a community oriented policing experience.⁴ In addition, according to a survey conducted by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of Law Enforcement Services, “90 percent of tribal police needed additional drug investigation training.”⁵

Jurisdiction

Tribal authority is an issue on tribal lands and constitutes a barrier to effective public safety. Indian nations have a government-to-government relationship with the federal government. However, there are limits to tribal authority, and legal authorities have referred to tribes as semi-sovereign, “domestic

dependent nations.”⁶ A series of federal laws over the past 200 years has slowly stripped tribal jurisdiction and made it increasingly difficult to ensure public safety in Indian country:

- In 1817, the General Crimes Act (also referred to as the Federal Enclaves Act or Indian Country Crimes Act), as amended, extended the criminal laws of the federal government into Indian country and generally established federal criminal jurisdiction where either, but not both, the alleged offender or the victim is Indian.⁷
- In the 1883 Crow Dog⁸ case, the Supreme Court upheld that the Lakota had reserved the right to hand out its own justice. However, the murder of Spotted Tail (Lakota) by Crow Dog (Lakota) and subsequent community-determined punishment left the U.S. judicial system wanting further prosecution of Crow Dog. The U.S. Supreme Court’s decision, and U.S. concerns over how Native traditions determine justice, led to the Major Crimes Act.⁹
- The 1885 Major Crimes Act (MCA) gave the federal government jurisdiction over specific crimes committed in Indian country. Originally, MCA provided federal criminal jurisdiction over seven major crimes even when committed by Indians in Indian country; over time other offenses have been added and the number now stands at 16 offenses.

- In 1953 Public Law 280 initially eliminated most BIA criminal jurisdiction in Indian country in five states, later increasing to six.¹⁰ Because of confusion concerning jurisdiction, and because many states and counties with jurisdiction over tribal nations also do not have adequate capacity to address public safety issues on tribal lands, many criminal cases that occur on Indian country are never tried. Amendments to Public Law 280 in 1968 allowed for tribal nations to retrocede Public Law 280 with consent of the state. The amendments also allowed states to return jurisdiction to tribal nations.
- The 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act (ICRA) set the statute that tribes may only sentence a defendant to one year in prison, or impose a fine of \$5,000, for any crime. The ICRA created an incentive for tribes to focus on minor crimes due to their limited sentencing ability, and a need to rely on the federal government to handle more serious offenses, as listed in the MCA.
- In 1978 the Supreme Court ruling of *Oliphant v. Suquamish Indian Tribe* set the statute that tribal courts do not have criminal jurisdiction over non-Indians, even if a crime is committed on Indian country.

6. Fred Foldvary, “Sovereignty for the Native American Indians,” Editorial posted October 28, 2013. www.progress.org/2013/10/28/sovereignty-native-american-indians/.

7. United States Government Accountability Office, Report to Congressional Requesters, *Indian Country Criminal Justice: Departments of the Interior and Justice Should Strengthen Coordination to Support Tribal Courts*, GAO-11-252, (Washington, D.C.: Government Accountability Office, 2011).

8. See *Ex parte Crow Dog*, 109 U.S. 556 (1883).

9. Major Crimes Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1153.

10. Carole Goldberg, Heather Valdez Singleton, “Final Report Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Under Public Law 280,” no. 222585, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice). (States: California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, Wisconsin, and later Alaska. Additional states assumed some jurisdiction in Indian country.)

3. The National Congress of American Indians, “Methamphetamine in Indian country: An American problem uniquely affecting Indian country,” *Native American Law Digest* 16, no. 12 (2006): 1–7.

4. George Gibmeyer, “Helping Tribal Law Enforcement Implement Community Policing,” *Community Policing Dispatch*, (August 2012), Page 1.

5. *Ibid.*

Three factors determine legal jurisdiction:

1. Where the crime was committed. Only crimes committed in Indian country are under tribal jurisdiction.
2. Who committed the crime. Tribes only have jurisdiction over American Indians; non-Indians are not subject to tribal jurisdiction. The Federal Government and states authorities have jurisdiction to prosecute offenses by non-Indians.
3. What crime was committed. Most serious crimes committed in Indian Country are under federal jurisdiction.

In response to the confusion created by these laws, efforts have been made to restore power to tribal governments. Public Law 638 (1975) and Public Law 413 (1994) work hand in hand to improve the self-governance of a tribe by establishing and solidifying the government-to-government relations between tribes and the U.S. government, and allowing tribes to form their own government and financial infrastructure.^{11,12} In 2010, the Tribal Law and Order Act (TLOA) expanded the punitive abilities of tribal courts across the nation. The law allows tribal courts operating in Indian country to increase jail sentences handed down in criminal cases. TLOA is unique because the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) met in collaboration with tribal leaders and tribal justice professionals in order to come up with a long-term plan to improve law enforcement in Indian country.

Summary

The complexity of the geography of Indian country, the current status of law enforcement, and the criminal jurisdictional issues has allowed methamphetamine to proliferate in Indian country.

Breaking the Meth Cycle: Identifying Community Solutions through the Summit Approach

On May 1-4, 2012, Strategic Applications International (SAI) brought together the COPS Office 2010 and 2011 Tribal Meth Grantees for a four day training and strategy-planning event in Phoenix, Arizona. Titled, *Break the Cycle: Methamphetamine and Community Oriented Policing in Indian Country*, the event was designed to help build the knowledge, skills, and leadership of the grantees and their community partners in addressing methamphetamine through a community oriented policing approach. Participants included law enforcement, treatment, prevention, recovery, and tribal government officials. At each of five plenary sessions, participants were led through tabletop discussions. Their solutions, insights, and experiences were captured and analyzed. The following summarizes the Summit discussions.

More information about SAI's Summit Model is described in the publication, *The Meth Summit: A Process in Collaboration and Decision Making* available on the SAI website at www.sai-dc.com.

11. "Public law 93-638: Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975." (88 Stat.; Date: 01/04/1975). Retrieved from www.idrsinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/7-PL-93-638.pdf.

12. "Public Law 103-413: Title IV- Tribal Self- Governance Act of 1994." (108 Stat.; Date: 10/25/1994). Retrieved from http://tribalselfgov.org/OSG_KenPosts/Self-Governance%20Title%20IV.pdf.

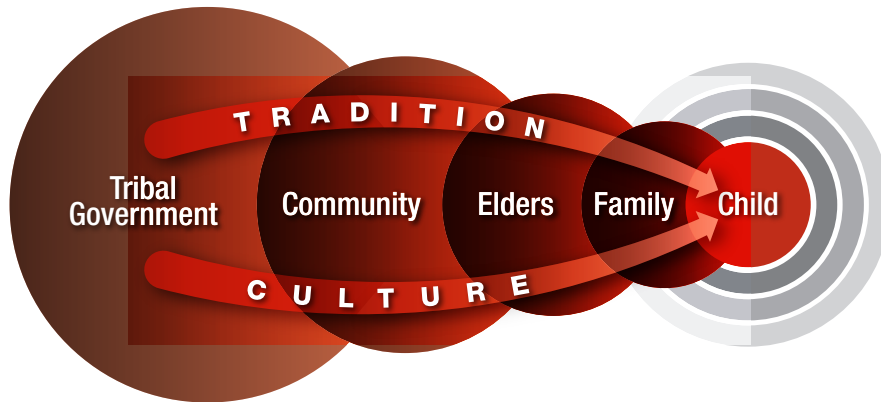


Figure 1: This is a relationship model for tribal prevention programs. Each segment of the larger tribal community forms a protective barrier around the small segment of the tribal community injecting culture and tradition into the core.

Prevention

Summit participants focused on a prevention model that targeted the individual child surrounded by family, elders, the tribal community, and enclosed by the tribal government. This prevention paradigm is heavily influenced by, and infused with, tradition and culture (see Figure 1).

Prevention starts by creating positive role models for Native American children. Summit participants concluded that mentoring, role models, activities, and goal development were critical components of a child-focused prevention program. Participants identified music, especially traditional music—whether dancing, playing an instrument, or singing—as a unique, culturally-based component of prevention programs. Family and elders are the strongest influences for a child in Indian country. Summit participants recommended that tribal communities create opportunities for families to learn together and bond around parenting skills. Participants recommended peer courts for families where the elders and youth work on alternatives to incarceration.

Participants reinforced the idea that community is the driver of effective prevention programs. Utilizing events such as POW-WOWS and festivals to bring attention to drug issues and strategies for promoting prevention activities offers the best opportunities to reach large numbers of the community. Community events provide opportunities to teach prevention through the use of language, spirituality, traditional skills, pride, and culture. Through these central touchstones of the tribe, forgiveness and acceptance become the hallmarks of a community-based prevention program.

The final and outer protective circle of this tribal prevention paradigm is that of tribal government. Leadership, collaboration, and stewardship are the key provisions of developing an effective substance abuse prevention strategy. Summit participants identified the need for tribal leadership to engage with the community, use their positions to mentor the youth of their tribe, and communicate—as well as demonstrate—their support of prevention to their community.

Forgiveness and acceptance are the basis of community-based prevention programs.



Figure 2: Law enforcement’s role in the community wellness process depends on developing positive relationships with organizations outside the tribe, inside the tribe, and within its own law enforcement agency itself.

Law Enforcement

The majority of Summit participants were from law enforcement. They often see their role in community oriented policing as a form of supply reduction—remove the threat (e.g., drug supply) from the community. From a law enforcement perspective, prevention, treatment, protecting endangered children, and recovery are abstract concepts that are better understood when put in the context of “putting bad guys in jail.” Officers realize that community oriented policing is something they do every day. The simple smile for a child walking to school is an important piece of the community–policing continuum. In most instances, a law enforcement officer cannot define how they are engaged in prevention, but they intuitively know that they are involved. Summit participants articulated that law enforcement’s prevention role includes:

- Mentoring
- Reducing the stigma for the victims of substance abuse
- Promoting information about substance abuse’s larger impact on the community

The art of solving a crime or substance abuse related problem is how law enforcement engages the community and how the community works with law enforcement. Law enforcement must help create an environment that respects the culture and traditions of the tribe, thus developing a sense of mutual trust and respect (see Figure 2). Training of law enforcement personnel in drug endangered children (DEC) protocols and ethics and cultural competency are important ingredients in building an effective tribal law enforcement agency. In part, our participants indicated that trust is the beginning of professionalizing law enforcement and the evolution of community oriented policing in Indian country.

Trusted relationships with law enforcement agencies outside of tribal law enforcement are essential in a community’s response to substance abuse. Developing memoranda of understanding that formalize relationships between tribal and non-tribal police goes a long way toward cross-jurisdictional collaboration. Collaborations between tribal law enforcement and community agencies strengthen the tribal law enforcement organization. These strong relationships allow for the sharing of resources, such as surveillance equipment, forensic and specialized expertise, and training opportunities.

Participants also believed that self-governed tribal law enforcement has a tremendous advantage over other external forms of policing because of their closer relationships with the tribal government and their respective communities.

Treatment

Participants emphasized culturally appropriate treatment that utilizes traditional healing as the key to success for Native American addicts. They believe that access to treatment is a fundamental right of indigenous people. However, treatment facilities are rarely close to the tribe, rarely culturally-based, and rarely easy to engage.

Indian country needs to build treatment capacity by establishing infrastructure, nurturing professionals, and developing a clear understanding of how tribal members can access treatment. Summit attendees stated that the tribe must create and sustain an expectation that treatment is a part of their community—educate the tribe on the need for treatment, and build tribal councils’ support for policies that promote treatment. Participants identified policies such as:

- Mandatory drug testing for tribal government employees and school teachers
- Treatment as an alternative to incarceration so that restorative justice should be part of the healing process for both the user and their victims
- Banishment for those who were not prepared or unwilling to engage in the healing process
- Compulsory treatment for those in custody when incarceration is required

Participants stated that recovering addicts should be celebrated and welcomed back into the community. Summit attendees strongly voiced the need to celebrate sobriety and forgiveness with community events and ceremonies. Just as important to the celebration is the long-term aftercare provided by the community to ensure that the member does not relapse. Additionally, communities must understand that relapsing is often part of the recovery process and not the justification for additional punishment. Finally, our participants suggested that those in recovery should be encouraged to mentor youth.

Summary

The Summit highlighted the grantees' clear knowledge of the elements needed for a successful community oriented policing strategy: collaboration and partnership; multiple approaches that address prevention, treatment, and law enforcement; and an emphasis on culture and tradition as the foundation of any strategy. Participants affirmed their struggle to translate their community policing strategy to actual practice.

Elements needed for a successful community oriented policing strategy:

- Collaboration and partnership
- Multiple approaches that address prevention, treatment, and law enforcement
- An emphasis on culture and tradition as the foundation of any strategy

Law enforcement personnel, in collaboration and coordination with their tribal, state, and federal partners, need to be trained on how they can strategically and operationally plan for addressing meth in their community. SAI's approach for moving tribes into action is a tabletop action planning exercise program, which simulates a community response situation in an informal, stress-free environment. Tabletop exercises are usually an element in local communities' disaster relief planning efforts. SAI has adapted this element for broader planning to address community threats utilizing a community oriented policing approach. The SAI program brings together tribal decision makers to discuss general problems and procedures in the context of methamphetamine use and abuse. The focus is on training and familiarization with roles, procedures, and responsibilities of a tribal community.

Action Planning

Whereas the Summit provided an opportunity for law enforcement and their prevention and treatment partners from different tribes to come together and discuss community oriented policing strategies, action planning events such as the one described below provide an opportunity for a community to zero in on strategies that address their particular needs and assets. Building off the peer exchanges at the Summit, the Action Planning event includes a one day in-person meeting with a wide variety of stakeholders and a half-day follow-up meeting approximately one month later.

Action Planning Steps:

1. Identify the Problem
2. Identify Participants
3. Visioning
4. Understand the Issue
5. Collect Data
6. Identify Barriers
7. Determine Appropriate Action
8. Develop the Plan
9. Implement, Evaluate, Refine the Plan

There are many tools available that describe how to conduct action planning. The following describes the action planning process SAI has been using for the past decade, with significant results, for states and communities dealing with methamphetamine. Typically, SAI conducts our action planning model with multiple jurisdictions in a Summit Approach. Within the Tribal Meth grant, SAI modified this approach to provide more one-on-one support in response to a Summit

that generated broader guidelines participants felt were necessary for designing action plans. Whether a Summit model or community specific model, there are several key steps the technical assistance communities have taken.

Having a clear understanding of the scope of the problem is a critical first step. SAI typically conducts an assessment with the community that is anchored in an ethnographic approach. By being on the ground with the community we gain a better understanding of their challenges and the predicaments of producing change to reduce the harms associated with substance abuse. The assessment involves a wide variety of stakeholders, to gain a broad view of the issue. It includes both qualitative data generated by individuals' experiences and perceptions; quantitative data (e.g., number of arrests, types of arrests, number of people in treatment); and asset mapping (types of prevention and treatment programs, history of inter-agency collaboration). Once the assessment is completed, a clearer picture emerges of the scope of the problem and the assets the community can build off of to address the issue. The assessment data is often presented back to participants during the action planning event.

Broad participation that includes decision makers and leaders, is key. During the initial meeting, participants should include the leadership of organizations and agencies that address any aspect of drug prevention, treatment, and law enforcement. This includes tribal police, elected officials, family services, and the courts. The broader the participation, the more information will be available to identify appropriate, actionable,

and impactful activities. If necessary, follow-up meetings may include only those agencies with specific roles in carrying out the action plan. If the group has been narrowed during implementation, we recommend keeping the broader group informed on progress quarterly; this encourages them to continue to support and champion the work.

Participants should have a mutually understood vision of what the group is working toward. Participants may want to take time at the outset of the meeting to create the vision and discuss the scope of the action plan. They should answer questions such as: "If we are successful, what would our community look like?" "Is this for one year?" "Is the focus on meth, or drugs in general?" "Is this for the community bound by the reservation (if one exists), or for tribal members more generally?" Getting the group on the same page regarding the scope of the solution will help focus brainstorming later on.

The initial deliberation is about understanding the problem. Meth use, abuse, and distribution does not just happen, there are a multitude of forces that shape how and why it creeps into and affects a community. Understanding the root causes of the issues also helps to identify the most effective solutions. In communities with problems of high child abuse and neglect, having programs that focus less on drug education and more on developing children's resilience will go farther to decrease future incidents of drug use. It is important to have data available to help guide the discussion and provide evidence to support what participants feel is happening.

Often, programs fail because there are significant barriers to implementation that were not accounted for in planning. Participants should discuss why the issue has not been addressed adequately before. What barriers have stood in the way of the community? For example, some have expressed concern that their tribal council only gives lip service to drug abuse problems but does little in the way of developing effective policy or resource allocation to affect change. On the other hand, many barriers may be outside of the community's control. The community may not be able to change some barriers, but with effort they can be overcome. For example, if having limited resources is a barrier to having a treatment center within the community, perhaps the solution is developing a memorandum of understanding with an existing treatment center in a neighboring community that designates a certain number of beds for the tribe and expands the center's programming to include culturally appropriate treatment for Native patients. Partnerships with universities or neighboring communities where both communities benefit can help overcome resource limitations.

Once participants have developed a shared understanding of the root cause(s) of the problem and the barriers to addressing the problem, they are ready to brainstorm solutions. A good kick off question would be, "How do we overcome the barriers and address the root cause of meth use and related crime in our community?" At this stage, brainstorming should be open and not based on what is available or practical. Refining and selecting the appropriate action comes later. Here, the focus should be on creativity. Participants should be encouraged

to think differently, getting at the heart of why meth and other drugs are affecting the community. However, solutions—once they've been identified—should be focused on what is within the control of the community.

This ends the day-long meeting.

Once possible solutions are identified, it is time for the action plan to be developed. Here, two steps are needed: prioritizing solutions and identifying roles and responsibilities. At the end of the day-long meeting, SAI synthesizes the information gathered and generates a follow-up survey for the participants. Through a prioritization process, the survey asks participants to rate each solution based on potential impact and feasibility. Then they are asked to identify which solutions are more important to implement. Once the results of the survey are ready, a half day follow-up meeting is necessary to share the results, gain consensus around the priority action items identified in the survey, develop action steps for each of the priorities, identify who will be responsible for each action item, and develop a process for tracking progress across all action items. Developing action steps should begin within the first 90 days. Having short-term steps to ensure early progress keeps the momentum moving forward after the initial meeting. Too long of a delay, and energy could be lost.

A key final step is thinking through how the efforts will be evaluated. Yes—before implementation. Participants should track whether the intervention is working or not. When developing plans, participants should articulate what they expect to see come out of implementing each of the action items. For example, if they develop a native language class for kids, perhaps the expectation is a greater connection to the



Photo credit: Kobby Dugan, Shutterstock

community's native culture as a key resilience factor. When implemented, the program should find a way to determine if kids are becoming more closely connected to their culture through the program. If the program is not working as intended, adjusting how the program is implemented, augmenting it with complementary programs, or identifying a different program would be appropriate responses. All things considered, the community has limited resources. SAI recommends putting those resources into programs that are having the impact the community wants.

Take time to celebrate. Once the action plan is ready, have participants take a minute to celebrate the accomplishment before implementation. Celebrating accomplishments along the way will help energize participants, as well as sustain the work.

Take time to celebrate
along the way.

Implementation is where the rubber meets the road. Many plans fail the critical step of moving into action because (1) the plan does not have leadership support; (2) the plan does not have community support and a broader base of champions holding implementers accountable; (3) there is not a clear sense of who is responsible and how to hold people or organizations accountable; and (4) the plan does not adequately take barriers into account. Ensuring leadership support will help address issues of accountability. Following SAI's process above will go a long way to overcoming implementation barriers.



Photo credit: Kobly Degan, Shutterstock

“...perhaps the expectation is a greater connection to the community’s native culture as a key resilience factor.”

The White Earth Example

On January 9, 2013, White Earth Tribal Nation representatives Council Chairwoman Erma J. Vizenor and Public Safety Director Randy Goodwin invited SAI to conduct an Action Planning Tabletop Exercise at the White Earth Shooting Star Convention Center in Mahanomen, Minnesota. Initially envisioned as a simulation, White Earth asked SAI to design a day-long session that would focus the White Earth Nation leadership on creating an action plan to address prescription drug, heroin, and methamphetamine abuse through a White Earth-specific community oriented policing approach. SAI facilitated discussions on White Earth’s existing strategic areas of Tradition/Language/Culture, Poverty, and Substance Abuse with the goal of creating an initial outline of a culturally appropriate action plan that leveraged knowledge for creative problem solving across the Nation’s governmental agencies.

Participation is key to action planning. Success depends on involving not only a wide range of stakeholders, but ensuring the participants are in a position to make decisions and hold themselves and, where applicable, their agencies accountable. White Earth successfully engaged their leadership, and participants represented diverse groups including law enforcement, treatment, prevention, recovery, and tribal government officials. There were 28 White Earth participants.

SAI led participants through three rounds of discussions. During the first round, the group focused on naming the problem. In essence, describing what the root causes of White Earth’s challenges were regarding the themes of tradition/language/culture, poverty, and substance abuse. Participants brainstormed the following list of root causes of substance abuse in the community:

- Children without direction and/or guidance
- Not enough resources to answer the crisis call (24x7)
- Finding personal plan and purpose; Need to build up our people
- Acceptance of the problem by the members of the White Earth Nation
- Family structure and guidance is missing or lacking
- “Drug of the Day” versus why do you do drugs? What does addiction do to the person?
- Breakdown of the family
- Frustration
- Family not feeling empowered
- Family unit breakdown
- Consequences and responsibility
- Community at the table
- Lack of hope – coping skills
- Poverty is a contributor
- Loss of hope
- Safety outside the home
- Help individuals get a handle on responsibilities and how to deal with them (Recovery)
- Positive role models
- Glorifying the problem
- Mental health contributes
- Educate women
- Normalize
- Teaching parents to parent
- Lack of identity
- Lost direction and role models
- Tribal people involved, opportunity and anger
- Re-education as it pertains to historical trauma
- Home – one shot at raising kids
- Healing our families
- Misconceptions of “prescribed drug” use
- Anxiety, depression, PTSD

During the second round of discussions, SAI led the full group in answering the question: Where do we get the data? Participants brainstormed the following list of data that would be valuable in developing detailed goals and objectives for an action plan:

- Single parent homes
- Truancy
- Income level
- Employment rate
- Feasibility study – housing development
- Recidivism
- Community assessment of people coming into treatment
- Child removals
- Home ownership and rental survey
- DUI
- Domestic violence
- Emergency room admits
- Youth survey
- Arrests
- Population movements
- Poverty
- Teen pregnancy
- Graduation rates
- Homelessness

For the third discussion, SAI broke participants up into three groups. Each group discussed the action plan needs of one of the three strategic areas: Tradition/Language/Culture, Poverty, or Substance Abuse. The Tradition/Language/Culture group discussed cultural competency training and programs, increased communication across programs and divisions, cultural and language activities, and programs that promote the White Earth traditions. The Poverty group focused on education and the need for adult and community involvement in education, work readiness, financial literacy training, and addressing

homelessness. The Substance Abuse group focused on activities centered around four themes: crisis intervention, education, prevention, and aftercare.

During the final phase of the event, the groups reported back to each other their findings and discussed who would manage the implementation plan. The White Earth Tribal Government has an existing team of tribal council members and government department directors who make up the executive committee. The executive committee is responsible for implementation and management of the White Earth Strategic Plan. Members of this executive committee were a part of the tabletop exercise.

Follow-up to the event provided a critical final step toward completing the planning process. SAI provided a follow-up survey to help identify the priority areas. SAI condensed the extensive information collected during that day into action items and categories of action. For each action item, survey recipients were asked to rate the item on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on importance and feasibility. Action items were grouped into the following categories: substance abuse prevention, specific prevention programs, intervention, aftercare, communications, community activity, and poverty. Respondents were then asked to select the top three action steps within each category. By the end of the process, White Earth had a prioritized action plan with specific and feasible activities.

Findings

Following are the top priorities for each of the seven categories:

Substance Abuse Prevention—strengthening and expanding current activities and events

Specific Prevention Programs—expanding “Brother Eagle”¹³ through all K-12 grades

Intervention—establish a 24/7 Detoxification Center

Aftercare—establishing, furnishing, and maintaining a community safe house

Tradition, Language, and Culture: Communication—establishing and maintaining spiritual gatherings, establishing youth advisory boards, and conducting cultural training

Tradition, Language, and Culture: Community Activities—creating a venue for positive stories to be told and written, hosting regular cultural events, and infusing culture into all community activities

Poverty—establishing career counseling programs for junior and senior high school children

The survey results included known resilience factors for children: positive adult mentors, hope, skills, service, and locus of control. Tying programs that are known to provide resiliency to substance use and abuse to a foundation of cultural traditions should prove effective for White Earth.

The key is implementation. Moving from plan into action is where many processes fall short. An initial action item like “establish a 24/7 Detox Center” looks great on paper, but how to accomplish it can seem overwhelming. Creating a list of action steps necessary for implementing each activity, with due dates, responsible parties, and a tracking system, helps move the action plan off the bookshelf and into implementation. White Earth uses a simple spreadsheet with each action item and corresponding activities tracked on an ongoing basis. Levels of progress (i.e., not started, in progress, and complete)

13. For more information about the Brother Eagle program, watch SAI’s webinar at www.methpedia.org/brother-eagle-webinar-video.



Native American culture, which historically whites had tried to take from them, is now generally understood as the greatest asset Native Americans have in the fight against meth.

are tracked using a color coding system so partners can quickly see how well each component of the action plan is going: not started in red, in progress is yellow, complete is green.

Key Learnings

The success of this event as a strategy for improving the way in which tribes adopt improved community-policing strategies is due to the following three reasons:

- 1. Participation.** The event included top White Earth leadership and key agency heads, the people critical for decision making. Without their participation, the resulting action plan would not have left the planning stage.
- 2. Naming the Problem.** By providing participants with time to come to a common understanding of what the underlying problem is, they were better able to come to consensus on action items that will have the greatest impact and overcome pet project areas and ideas.
- 3. Follow-up and follow-through.** The day ended with plans for next steps, including who is responsible and by when. This allowed the group to hold each other accountable for moving toward implementing the plan.

Conclusion

Tribal law enforcement has significant barriers to addressing drug use and abuse that non-tribal police do not have. They have significant limits placed on their jurisdictional control, large geographic areas to cover, and limited police forces. Native American culture, which historically whites had tried to take from them, is now generally understood as the greatest asset Native Americans have in the fight against meth. Using this unique source of strength to develop prevention and treatment programs, foster trust between agencies and with community members, and establish law enforcement as a community partner, tribes have the foundation for successful community oriented policing strategy. However, like other communities, moving from planning to action will require leadership, interagency collaboration, and accountability. SAI's Action Planning process can assist tribes in navigating from planning into successful implementation of a comprehensive community oriented policing strategy.



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