



## **FNA secures \$2 million grant to address trauma in indigenous families**

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Fairbanks, Alaska-Fairbanks Native Association will expand treatment services for traumatic events and intergenerational trauma that children and their families face.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has awarded FNA Behavioral Health Services a five-year, \$2 million grant for a new program called Healing the Hurts. The new program will provide support and trauma services for indigenous children and their families.

Intergenerational trauma in indigenous people is unconscious grief as a result of loss of land, loss of spiritual practices, language and culture, according to the American Psychiatric Association. It is passed from one generation to the next.

A traumatic event is a “shocking, scary, or dangerous experience that can affect someone emotionally and physically,” according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Indigenous people disproportionately experience child abuse and neglect, sexual violence and suicide. Healing the Hurts will focus on those types of events.

“In reality, Native people have carried intergenerational trauma within families with very little understanding or relief,” said Perry Ahsogeak, FNA BHS director. “We have always understood it, and have been building our services to address it. This grant is a crucial piece and we’re very happy to get it.”

The award, which is from SAMHSA’s National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, will provide outreach, trauma screening, trauma prevention workbooks for adolescents and family, office-based and home-based outpatient treatment, and trauma-informed care training.

The new program will collaborate with the National Child Traumatic Stress Centers. It will employ a project director, a therapist/case manager, a home visitor/therapist and a screener/assessor.

“Trauma, in all its forms, has been a heavy burden for our people,” said Steve Ginnis, FNA executive director. “I’m glad that FNA’s board of directors and staff have been dedicated to healing, and this grant is a result of that vision.”

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