



SACRAMENTO NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH CENTER

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOCUS GROUP REPORT: AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE YOUTH

2024



Background. Between October 2023 and January 2024, the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) conducted a needs assessment with patients and community members to evaluate how SNAHC can continue meeting current needs of the community. Historically, needs assessments have revealed the need for added services, programming and specialties. Needs assessments are vital for understanding the priorities of patients and potential patients in the provision of Federally Qualified Health Center services, inclusive of medical, behavioral health, dental, specialty and supportive services. This report summarizes the findings from the SNAHC needs assessment **focus groups** and identifies the actions SNAHC will take to address these needs.

On November 30, 2023, the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) held a focus group with participants from SNAHC's Native Youth Ambassadors youth leadership program. The youth provided insight on their experiences being Native youth in Sacramento County by describing their culture and what being Native means to them. Additionally, they offered feedback on how AI/AN youth in the community can be better served by SNAHC and other local organizations through resources, services, and programs; including ways safety and cultural competence can be cultivated within these spaces. The following summary outlines SNAHC's findings from this focus group.

Overview

On November 30, 2023, the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) held a 90-minute focus group at its SNAHC Florin Road location. The purpose of the focus group was to inform the Native Connections Community Needs Assessment (CNA), which will also include a survey component.

Methods

A total of 13 American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) youth, including 5 SNAHC patients, participated in the group. Youth ranged in age from 11-16 years old and had an average age of 13.7 years old.

Participants responded to six focus group question prompts, either verbally or on sticky notes.

1. What does it mean to be a Native or Indigenous youth in Sacramento?
2. What is culture, and what does it mean to you?
3. What do youth in our community need?
4. What people or organizations are available to help Native youth in Sacramento?
5. What do you like best about coming to SNAHC for Native Youth Ambassadors or other programs?
6. How can the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) help more Native and Indigenous youth?
7. How can SNAHC make safe and welcoming spaces where everyone can learn more about who they are?

Results

Results are presented in order of focus group question and prompt, and there is a summary of results at the end of this report.

What does it mean to be a Native or Indigenous youth in Sacramento? Youth provided the following responses to the question about what it means to be Native or Indigenous in Sacramento, and the focus of responses was on being a role model to others, a helper, and someone engaged in culture/community.

- Role model to others

- *“When I see older people successful, giving back to their community, and inspiring them [other youth] to give back.”*
- Helper
 - *“Helping your peers in community.”*
- Engaged in culture/community
 - *“To share what your culture is about.”*
 - *“Being able to continue cultural activities.”*
 - *“Being present in your community.”*

What is culture and what does it mean to you? When asked what culture is and what it means to them, the most frequently mentioned responses were heritage (2 youth), people (2 youth), dancing (3 youth), food (2 youth), music (2 youth), and traditions (2 youth). This can be categorized into four themes: Culture as belonging, heritage/traditional practices, identity and health, and social practices and arts.

Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family ● Respecting elders ● People x2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People who are close to you ● Connection
Culture and Traditional Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Heritage x 2 ● Beliefs ● Religious/spiritual practices ● Holidays ● Traditions x2 ● Passing down stories, traditions, and teachings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achievements in Native history ● Learning your origins/where you come from ● Learning traditional ways ● Stories
Identity and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Health ● Finding your community role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pride ● Motivation ● Values
Social Practices and Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practices ● Activities/games x2 ● Cultural events (Powwows) ● Flags ● Traveling to powwows and round dances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clothing/jewelry x2 ● Food x2 ● Dancing x3 ● Drumming ● Music x2 ● Singing x2 ● Language

What do youth in our community need? Youth provided responses about what youth in the Native community need to feel safe, take care of themselves, take care of their mental health, and have fun.

What Youth Need to Feel Safe

- More resources to reach out to for help
- Safe spaces x2
- Mentors
- Community
- Resources
- Money
- Safe people to talk to
- People you recognize
- Knowing someone is there to support you
- Friends
- Being respectful
- Family
- More street lights
- Comfortable environment

What Youth Need to Take Care of Themselves

- Better school life balance
- Free WIFI & computer usage for school
- Free tutoring
- Smaller friend group i.e. more intimate friend group
- Wellness
- Safe place
- Sanctuary
- Mental break
- Goals
- PSA Guides
- Healthy Habits
- Taking care of hygiene
- Self-love/affirmations
- Mental breaks
- Physical help
- Have someone to talk to

What Youth Need for Their Mental Health

- Less pressure on success in school
- Understanding teachers and peers
- Support
- Someone to talk to/therapy
- Relax
- Physical health
- Ways to handle stress
- Get rid of toxic people
- Lose draining/hindering things in life
- Distract themselves with things they love
- Have someone to talk to
- Help

What Youth Need to Have Fun

- To go outside
- More youth sports team programs
- Auto-shop programs
- Including peers
- Time off school/work
- Vacation
- Shopping
- To talk to and hang out with friends
- To find a new hobby
- Go out with loved ones
- Realizing what makes you happy
- Playing games with your loved ones

These findings emphasize the need for safety to include safe spaces, places, and people. To take care of themselves and have positive mental wellness, youth need to learn self-care practices and explore healthy ways of reducing stress. SNAHC could use these findings to increase awareness of existing resources in the community to help youth feel safe, teach youth coping skills to better handle school, family, and work-related stressors, and host programming in its Youth Space at SNAHC Florin Road. SNAHC can also continue collaborations with partner organizations to improve the built environment throughout Sacramento County.

What people or organizations are available to help Native youth in Sacramento? Participants in the focus group said that SNAHC, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Sol Collective were available to help Native youth in Sacramento. This finding reflects knowledge of some Native serving and culture-based organizations but highlights the need for more education about informal and formal support for Native youth.

What do you like best about coming to SNAHC for Native Youth Ambassadors or other programs? Youth indicated that they come to SNAHC to:

- *“Get out of the house,”*
- *“Learn more about culture,”*
- *“Meet other people in community,”*
- *“[Participate in] volunteer opportunities,”* and
- *“Help at events.”*

A total of 5 of the 13 youth (38%) are current patients at SNAHC, which means those youth also come to SNAHC for medical care.

How can the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) help more Native and Indigenous youth? Responses were gathered to assess areas that SNAHC can support youth in programming and service provision. Youth stated that SNAHC should provide the following:

- Programs to better understand/experience culture
- Regalia making classes & basket weaving classes & ribbon skirts
- Language classes
- Cultural cooking classes
- How to make medicine bags
- Learning about cultural healing
- Internship program to showcase the jobs at SNAHC
- Career readiness program
- Interviewing skill building
- College prep classes
- Tutors
- Resume building
- Help applying to jobs
- Financial literacy classes
- More focus groups with varying populations
- Keep NYA and SPARK
- Make NYA for college students
- NYA going on trips
- Youth volunteer opportunities
- Social events
- Public gym or athletic center with discounted cost for Indigenous people

Additionally, when asked how SNAHC can help respect their culture while attending programming and services at SNAHC, responses related to hiring knowledgeable people that represent Native backgrounds, being aware that Tribes have different beliefs (learn about what they are), and not generalizing knowledge about Tribes.

Thematic responses from this question were that SNAHC should expand youth programs to focus on cultural connection and understanding, ensure that programming includes education and life skills development for short- and long-term career goals, and consider programming that promotes civic engagement and physical activity.

How can SNAHC make safe and welcoming spaces where everyone can learn more about who they are?

This was the final question in the focus group, and the youth spent considerable time providing suggestions for how SNAHC can make safe and welcoming spaces where youth can learn about who they are. Responses are provided by category below, with suggestions for how SNAHC can support learning more about their gender, Two-Spirit identity, and sexual identity (to whom they are attracted).

<p>How SNAHC Can Provide Spaces Where Youth Can Learn More About Their Gender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An accepting environment ● Programs to learn more ● Hosting Talking Circles ● Offer Youth Culture is Prevention programs ● Speakers at SNAHC to talk about their experience ● More plant walks with Sage LaPena 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● After school program ● Having an online resource page ● Have mentors you can relate to/people you look up to ● Trips ● Self-retreat ● SNAHC
<p>How SNAHC Can Provide Spaces Where Youth Can Learn More About Two-Spirit Identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SNAHC [is] welcoming ● Meet and visit with peers with similar experiences ● Schools ● Clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Manny’s Talking Circle ● Two-Spirit mentors/volunteers ● Pride events ● Peers, friends, family
<p>How SNAHC Can Provide Spaces Where Youth Can Learn More About Sexual Identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online resources ● LGBT Community Center ● Clubs (Inside and outside school) ● Online ● Friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community ● By people who know more about it ● Finding yourself ● Experience ● Social events

The responses provided by the youth indicate a need to feel supported in their journey to young adulthood, regardless of their gender identity. This is an important developmental period. Further questions about Two-Spirit identity and sexual identity made it even clearer that youth overall feel that gender non-conforming and questioning youth should have specialized services. SNAHC can provide greater support and visibility by celebrating LGBTQIA+2S members in the community, fostering a sense of acceptance and support, and ensuring allyship. Further, training and workshops on allyship and the importance of its role for AI/AN people could be valuable.

Summary of Findings

The data collected offers valuable insight into the diverse needs and aspirations of Native youth living in Sacramento County *today*. Moreso, it represents a comprehensive approach to creating supportive environments for youth to explore and learn more about themselves, their multiple cultural identities, and gender identity development within the context of their cultural heritage and community support, providing recommendations within and beyond SNAHC's scope of services.

While emphasizing the importance of culture and role models, youth highlighted the need for resources, safe spaces and people, skills and tools for self-care, mental health support, and to have fun. This included direct support and skills building, as well as support in the schools and changes in the built environment (reducing violence, increasing lighting, sidewalks, etc.) to improve safety.

To make SNAHC safe and welcoming, youth emphasized the importance of creating an overall accepting space for everyone. When asked about gender, gender identity, and sexual identity, it was clear that all youth need to feel supported in their journey in the transition to young adulthood. It was also clear that they feel that Two-Spirit, LGBTQ+, and gender non-conforming people need additional group or individual support, and greater demonstration of acceptance and allyship within broader community programming. They recommended providing more educational programs, workshops, and training to ensure allyship.

Recommendations

To help more Native and Indigenous youth, SNAHC will:

- Expand youth cultural offerings and classes.
- Establish career readiness programs, internship opportunities, life skills classes, financial literacy workshops and identity exploration programs. Consider exploration of grant funding and partnerships that engage higher education institutions to help develop the curricula.
- Build partnerships and programs that promote a culture of college readiness and advanced education starting early in youth programming. Integrate a framework within youth programming that creates opportunities to engage youth support systems (i.e. parents) in promoting post-high school opportunities, so that encouragement begins early and occurs often.
- Assess whether SNAHC can organize social events and youth volunteer opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for youth to learn about physical health and wellness.
- Expand current programs to include college students and LGBTQ+ allyship training. As needed, recruit more AI/AN staff, and ensure continued staff training on cultural humility/competency.
- Seek out partnerships that increase access to indoor and outdoor means of physical activity for AI/AN youth.



SACRAMENTO NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH CENTER

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT
FOCUS GROUP REPORT:
SNAHC SCHOOL-BASED
HEALTH CENTER**

2024

**PACERS
TAKE SPACE**

Background. Between October 2023 and January 2024, the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) conducted a needs assessment with patients and community members to evaluate how SNAHC can continue meeting current needs of the community. Historically, needs assessments have revealed the need for added services, programming and specialties. Needs assessments are vital for understanding the priorities of patients and potential patients in the provision of Federally Qualified Health Center services, inclusive of medical, behavioral health, dental, specialty and supportive services. This report summarizes the findings from the SNAHC needs assessment **focus groups** and identifies the actions SNAHC will take to address these needs.

On January 31, 2024, the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) held a focus group with Grant Union High School (GUHS) students who have utilized services at the school-based health center on campus, Pacers Take Space (PTS). Based on their experience at PTS, the participants offered feedback on what they like and dislike about PTS services, ways PTS can improve, and how to ensure students are aware of the on-campus health center and its services. The following summary outlines SNAHC's findings from this focus group.

Overview

On January 31, 2024, the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) held a 90-minute focus group at Pacers Take Space (PTS), the school-based health center run by SNAHC at Grant Union High School (GUSD). PTS is a collaborative site with school-based counselors from Twin Rivers School District (TRSD) and case managers and supportive staff from Neighborhood Wellness Foundation (NWF) co-located within the facility.

Methods

A total of 13 youth who have utilized services at PTS participated in the group. Participants responded to five focus group question prompts.

1. What do you like about PTS?
2. What do you *not* like about PTS?
3. How many of you go to a doctor outside of PTS?
4. What types of services would you like to see offered to GUHS students at PTS? What about over the summer? How can we let students know we are still here, and they can still receive care?
5. What is the best way to let students know about what is being offered at PTS?

Results

Results are presented in order of focus group question and prompt, and there is a summary of results at the end of this report. Results are stratified by applicability to one, two or all three partners co-located at the site, specifically SNAHC, NWF, and TRSD.

What do you like about Pacers Take Space? Strengths of PTS were the staff, mental health supports, confidentiality, and supportive services (essentials pantry, youth talking circles).

Strengths of PTS		Applicable to:		
		SNAHC	NWF	TRSD
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I like that you guys have friendly staff, [they’re] not intimidating to talk to.” “I like how nice the staff are in Pacers Take Space, they are very considerate with everything.” 	x	x	x
Mental Health Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “One thing I like about Pacers Take Space is that students come here to talk about their feelings and this place is safe for students.” “Pacers Take Space helps students with these emotions and it’s a calming place to be away from campus. We really like the sensitive services. They are really supportive.” 	x		
Confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I like that you guys offer therapy and you don’t tell parents about it.” “The school health center offers students the ability to confidentially talk to a doctor...” 	x		
Supportive Services: Essentials Pantry and Youth Circles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The pantry is something that I feel like a lot of students like and are grateful for” “Pantry 4x a week [for] food, snacks, clothes, hygiene/sex products.” “Youth circles are great for learning while being able to earn a gift card and have good food.” 		x	
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “I like that it gives opportunities and help to students that didn’t have it before.” 	x	x	x

What do you *not* like about Pacers Take Space? Areas of improvement were youth talking circle topics, small physical space(s), lack of understanding about PTS and how to use it, limited availability of providers/appointments, teacher concern(s), and unmet basic needs.

Areas of Improvement for PTS		Applicable to:		
		SNAHC	NWF	TRSD
Limited Availability of Providers and Appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[Needs] more psychologists.” • “To have time for students to meet a therapist 2 times in a week.” 	X		
Lack of Understanding of PTS and How to Use it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It’s hard to get information on how it works; only get information from Instagram page” 	X	X	X
Enhanced Youth Talking Circles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “[I dislike] how awkward the beginning of the circles are.” • “Not enough time in the circles to rant or vent.” • “I would like for the youth circles on Tuesdays/Fridays to increase their capacity [by having] bigger/wider range of topics, sometimes the topics are a previous topic” 		X	
Unmet Basic Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Pacers Take Space should have more health essentials.” (i.e. toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc.) • “I would like for PTS to have water bottles/water stations.” • “I would like more snacks and drinks.” • “Expand pantry and service hours.” 	X	X	X
Space Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The space is small.” 	X	X	X
Teacher Concerns with Appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “This one isn’t [PTS’s] fault, but when teachers don’t allow students to come to PTS.” • “When students ask to go, teachers ask why, but some students don’t want to say because it is private” 			

How many of you go to a doctor outside of Pacers Take Space? A total of 7 out of 13 students who utilize PTS reported having a primary care physician outside of the facility (i.e., were not using PTS as their primary care location).

What types of services would you like to see offered at PTS? Types of services requested included workshops and programs. Additionally, students would like to see services expanded to after-school and across campus.

Additional Services/Programs		Applicable to:		
		SNAHC	NWF	TRSD
Workshops and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College application how-tos with college admissions officers • Financial aid • Stress management and coping skills • Classes for parents about mental health needs of high school students • Transportation for students • Classes for immigrant students about U.S. and school customs/norms • Creative outlets • After-school teen daycare • Campus relaxation/meditation areas • More after school programs • Additional student evaluations 		X	X
Summer Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships • Poetry sessions and other fun events in PTS to promote the space 		X	X
Additional SNAHC Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counseling for additional students 	X		

What is the best way to let students know about what is being offered at PTS? Suggested advertising methods was via fliers, text messaging including directly to students, multiple social media platforms, and via teacher announcements and messaging to parents.

Suggested Advertising Methods		Applicable to:		
		SNAHC	NWF	TRSD
Fliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hang in approved posting areas on campus Hand out to students and parents during back-to-school nights 	x	x	
Text Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent introductory messaging about PTS to students and their parents via school messaging platform(s) 	x		x
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media updates on multiple platforms; <i>“Instagram is helpful, but expand to other platforms.”</i> 	x		
Via Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fliers in classrooms Script for teachers to send to parents 	x		X

Additional Student Comments About PTS. Additional student comments were supportive and suggested continued service provision at SNAHC’s school-based location.

- *“It feels like an honor to be a part of SNAHC. Therapy has had a good impact on mental health and depression.”*
- *“There are things about school that are overwhelming or frustrating. It’s important to take some space for them to have a break.”*

Recommendations

Based on findings from this focus group, SNAHC will work collaboratively with NWF and TRSD to address suggestions. SNAHC will:

- Work with teachers to provide fliers, script language about PTS to email to parents, and information about how to engage with students about PTS. Specifically, how to be supportive without asking students about confidential health topics.
- Develop a scheduling procedure so students do not routinely miss the same periods in school. For example, weekly counseling appointments occur during alternating class periods/topics.
- Ensure all students are able to receive an initial visit so that providers can assess the student and provide students with information that may need to go back to their primary care provider.
- Engage in multiple communication methodologies with students and their parents, including fliers, text messaging, and social media on various platforms; explore relationship building and information dissemination through the Parent-Teacher Association. Gain a TRSD email so that SNAHC PTS emails can be emailed to students from an “internal” email address, which students can receive directly.

- Work with NWF, TRSD, and the City of Sacramento, among other actors to engage in systems-level advocacy, to ensure basic needs are being met on campus, specifically the provision of potable water and health care supplies within the essentials pantry.
- Share results of the needs assessment with NWF and GUHS/TRSD so additional supportive services and programs can be offered to students, as appropriate.
- Conduct patient satisfaction surveys to ensure high quality care consistent with SNAHC J Street and Florin Road locations.

SACRAMENTO NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH CENTER

NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOCUS GROUP REPORT: TRADITIONAL HEALTH

2024



Background. Between October 2023 and January 2024, the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) conducted a needs assessment with patients and community members to evaluate how SNAHC can continue meeting current needs of the community. Historically, needs assessments have revealed the need for added services, programming and specialties. Needs assessments are vital for understanding the priorities of patients and potential patients in the provision of Federally Qualified Health Center services, inclusive of medical, behavioral health, dental, specialty and supportive services. This report summarizes the findings from the SNAHC needs assessment **focus groups** and identifies the actions SNAHC will take to address these needs.

On December 11 and 15, 2023, the Sacramento Native American Health Center (SNAHC) held two focus groups with AI/AN adult patients and community members in Sacramento County. Participants in these two focus groups gave insight into the Native community's needs for traditional health and medicine, and how SNAHC can best meet these needs. The following summary outlines findings from these focus groups.

Introduction

As part of the SNAHC community needs assessment survey, we assessed areas for additional traditional health programming and services. Based on these results, SNAHC, four areas were explored in-depth through two in-depth focus groups with AI/AN patients and community members: (1) food sovereignty education, (2) nutrition and traditional food classes or discussions; (3) herbal remedies for sale; and (4) additional cultural classes.

Methods

SNAHC developed a focus group instrument which was implemented during two 90-minute, virtual focus groups in December 2023. These questions asked participants about traditional health and what it means to them, areas that SNAHC should expand or prioritize traditional health services, and other areas of importance that the community wants SNAHC to keep in mind when considering traditional health. A total of 29 people participated (42 were recruited and scheduled) in both focus groups, including 9 of whom are current patients at SNAHC (31%). Focus groups were recorded and transcribed, and the SNAHC team used content analysis to identify themes within the qualitative data.

Results

Results are presented both in summary by type and total number of qualitative themes, and by summary of responses by item. Six themes emerged from the two focus groups, each explained in-depth below, with the total number of times each arose during the focus groups presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Emergent Themes and Number of Times Mentioned in Focus Groups

Theme	Group 1 # of Mentions	Group 2 # of Mentions	Total
Accessibility	45	36	81
Holistic Health; Mind, Body, and Spirit through Traditional Knowledge	15	26	41
Space	35	17	52
Belonging	23	6	29
Rules	25	0	25
Autonomy	14	7	21

Theme 1: Accessibility. This theme was characterized by participants wanting to expand traditional health knowledge and for SNAHC to provide access to it via programming or services. This theme also included discussion of the logistics or overall system of care provided by SNAHC, such as what time of day or where classes should be offered.

The discourse on accessibility across both focus groups showcased a rich diversity of perspectives, mirroring the varied interests among participants. Some highlighted the significance of traditional health, particularly through food sovereignty education, while others placed greater emphasis on spirituality and ceremonial practices. A participant's sentiment captured this, expressing a desire for regular classes or workshops on self-care practices like smudging, recognizing that not everyone possesses this knowledge. The expansion of SNAHC's Healing Ways program was proposed, with suggestions for increasing mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities to support SNAHC's Clinical Herbalist. Another idea involved introducing a healthy Native cooking class. Aligning with the group's insights, SNAHC has already implemented the expansion of the Healing Ways program and plans for Native cooking classes are in motion at the new location in South Sacramento. However, the findings show the need for wider community awareness about these offerings.

Logistical considerations around traditional health services were also extensively discussed. This encompassed the idea of having both virtual and hybrid sessions, providing programming with flexible timings at both SNAHC locations. Additionally, there was a recognition of barriers related to transportation and childcare, which could hinder attendance.

Quotes About Accessibility

- *“Maybe having specific classes for specific tribes to teach people traditional ways.”*
- *“Offering virtual talking circles focus on mental health needs”*
- *“Awareness of the effects of genocide. How that has impacted Native Americans and our holistic health.”*
- *“For those that come from a low-income background that don’t have the means to go out and do these different things on Native land because they were born into the inner-city environment.”*
- *“I don’t live where my tribe is from so it’s kind of hard to learn my own ways.”*
- *“I would love to see a regular class or just a one-day workshop on self-care like smudging and things like that... because not just everyone knows how to do that.”*
- *“The cost of actually getting a garden and setting it up is too expensive.”*
- *“Herbal remedies free of no cost, I really like that idea.”*
- *“We’d be able to have cooking classes with the food from the garden and then providing herbal remedies, we could get the herbals from the garden.”*

Theme 2: Holistic Health; Mind, Body, and Spirit through Traditional Knowledge. This theme was defined by participants’ need for a comprehensive exploration of this holistic framework. Emphasis was placed on the importance of nutrition, spirituality, and mental well-being within this context, particularly during the discussion of potential classes and programming.

Both groups engaged in discussions revolving around holistic health, emphasizing crucial components: mental well-being from a traditional perspective, the wisdom of the medicine wheel advocating for harmony across physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies while acknowledging their interdependence, historical contemplation, land-based healing methods, and expanded cultural education about mental health. Within this discourse, one participant highlighted the profound impact of genocide on AI/AN holistic health, underscoring the untreated consequences leading to intergenerational trauma and resulting ailments and the need for SNAHC to educate on this topic. In the second group, some members expressed openness to the idea of a SNAHC sweat lodge, welcoming urban AI/AN individuals less connected to their cultural roots to share space with. Conversely, the first group exhibited divided opinions—half viewed it as a deviation from sanctity and tradition for SNAHC to consider or provide these services, while the other half perceived it as an avenue to revive lost customs that should be undertaken by SNAHC. By reflecting on these conversations, SNAHC has the potential to greatly improve the community’s environment, fostering an atmosphere where mental health can be addressed organically and where the historical context is considered and discussed, creating a safe environment for both vulnerability and education.

Quotes About *Holistic Health*

- *“How that has impacted Native Americans and our holistic health. Intergenerational trauma and the diseases that it causes.”*
- *“I think the hardest thing for me is trying to figure out how all of that works, traditional medicine. Like how does it go when a person has a mental illness and things like that?”*
- *“Intake is really important and contributes to our health. Our diets are so different from what they were pre-contact.”*
- *“When we don’t have access to sweat lodges, we still have to keep ourselves in a good way and learn how to protect ourselves and get rid of negative energy or anxiety or any other kinds of emotions that might be out of whack in our bodies.”*
- *“The lived experience for urban Indians varies very differently from those on reservations. Having that displacement of being away from your reservation and not having that connection really creates a lot of trauma around that.”*
- *“Learning to grow some of the plant medicines that we would be using either to take care of us spiritually or plants that we would be consuming – that would be good for us, you know, for our bodies. I think that that in itself is a type of ceremony and a type of therapy for someone’s mental health.”*
- *“To take more of a holistic perspective on the way we care for ourselves and having spiritual guidance with that and kind of integrate that with community mental health and spirituality.”*
- *“What I feel is more needed is having more land-based healing regarding mental health. Not everybody can share or heal in a type of clinic.”*

Theme 3: Space. This theme was discussion about the need for a safe, sacred, and connected space where community members could be nurtured into learning and practicing traditional ways. This encompassed not only the physical space but also the concept of embracing diversity and active engagement while upholding tradition and the piety of teachings and gatherings.

The primary focus of discussion within the first group was ensuring community support and the safe, respectful transmission of teachings and ceremonies in adherence to traditions. Their concerns revolved around guidance and proper instruction, emphasizing the need for a structured approach and the involvement of, for example, elder’s council to oversee and approve ceremonies at SNAHC, including who would be permitted to attend them. In contrast, the second group, primarily composed of AI/AN individuals from out of state, exhibited a distinct perspective. Many hailed from diverse locations, and one participant even proposed the idea of SNAHC establishing a support group tailored for those living away from their respective Tribes. Their collective focus leaned toward creating an inclusive environment conducive to learning and community engagement, with less emphasis on restricting participation to certain or specific groups. These insights prompt SNAHC to reflect on whether providing ceremonial services, while potentially restricting access to some at the request of the community, aligns with SNAHC’s vision for programming. Leveraging SNAHC’s Community Health and Healing Ways departments, both equipped with culturally appropriate programming, SNAHC aims to further its positive impact on the well-being of individuals and the wider community. By continuing to serve as a secure hub for

AI/AN individual's navigating challenges within Indian country, SNAHC actively fosters a supportive environment.

SNAHC has influenced the welfare of individuals and the broader community. In doing so, it can function as a secure hub for AI/AN individual's navigating challenges within Indian country.

Quotes About Space

- *“SNAHC as a hub—offering virtual and in person gatherings for sharing medicine.”*
- *“Having spaces for Queer people to have these same teachings.”*
- *“Highlight that we are in an urban area and all from different tribes.”*
- *“I was very far removed from the culture because my great grandmother and grandpa both died before I was born and then when I was very young, so I wasn't taught a lot of those cultural teachings.”*
- *“Just a separate support group because we are all obviously further from our culture.”*
- *“I don't feel connected to any local sweats. If I were on my reservation that access would be there with my family but because I am out of state it does feel there is more of a disconnect.”*
- *“But as a person, I think you need to self-police yourself on whether that's something you should be going to or attending whether it's the right time, you're in the right frame of mind, there's just all kinds of teachings that we all have.”*
- *“AS a disabled person I don't like to go out or anything like that. Also, if I'm going to need help, there just isn't any help for disabled people my age. I'm younger, you know, I'm not 65. There isn't any help.”*

Theme 4: Belonging. Belonging was characterized as a sense of community, embracing acceptance, the sharing and nurturing of voices, and the fortification of relationships among community members, fostering connections not just with each other and within themselves, but also with their ancestors and cultural practices.

In the first group, one participant underscored the shifting societal attitude towards embracing AI/AN ancestry and identity, stressing its importance and our involvement in sustaining this upward trend. Our research unveiled that many AI/AN people residing in Sacramento County are not exclusively California American Indians. Our community comprises a diverse spectrum of Indigenous peoples, including those of mixed race or who have experienced de-tribalization, forced to assimilate into contemporary American culture. The establishment of accessible pathways for individuals and families to delve deeper into their heritage and foster a sense of belonging within the Sacramento community is crucial to the revitalization of AI/AN culture at large. Taken together, findings indicate the importance of SNAHC expanding traditional health services only when belonging (i.e., inclusive spaces) can be prioritized.

Quotes About *Belonging*

- “[Traditional Health is a] Community feeling we get from dancing, songs, culture and things like that that we can share.”
- “My way is to listen and usually people are moving onto the next thing, and you don't ever get to say what you have to say. Talking circles are a way where you can have your voice and say what's on your mind and you can be heard.”
- “we're pulling together all kinds of different traditions.”
- “By witnessing other cultural events, or ceremonies, or being on the same grounds while these are happening was very empowering.”
- “I think a lot of people who are mixed have that sort of, imposter syndrome, that we don't belong in these spaces”
- “We strengthen our relationship with our community, with each other, and with ourselves and our ancestors.”

Theme 5: Rules. Like theme 3, which focused on space, this theme highlighted the group's request on customs and adhering to the regulations guiding traditional practices. These protocols extended to both SNAHC and the community, necessitating permissions for specific ceremonies or teachings and meticulous guidance in their execution. In addition, there was contention on whether ceremonial practices should be open to Alaskan Natives and American Indians from other Tribal Nations outside of California versus having closed ceremonies that only allowed for the attendance and participation of California Tribal members.

This concept was strongly across one of the two focus groups, reflecting a desire for structure, protocol, and reverence. Their discussion delved beyond logistics, focusing on the care and reciprocity necessary for engaging in these cultural practices. Traditional medicine and its modalities are regarded with deep reverence as a living entity and are a direct connection to past caretakers, stressing the importance of treating them with the utmost respect. There was some deliberation about the level of detail required at SNAHC due to concerns about cultural appropriation even across other AI/AN groups. Ultimately, participants reached a consensus that SNAHC's approach to ceremonial practices must be considerate and meticulously planned, if SNAHC is to embark into this area of programming.

Quotes About Rules

- *“It is not about excluding people... [however,] it becomes problematic SNAHC allowing everyone in.”*
- *“Vetting required on who is providing the ceremony. SNAHC being an urban Indian health center—when we talk about ceremony, what ceremony? There are things, ceremony, that I shouldn't be participating in even as a Native person. Having a trusted resource that could inform us on what could potentially be done and what to avoid.”*
- *“I think [having] cultural classes related to ceremony so that you know some things may be restricted to you because you're not of a particular group. Or if you're of another group you may just do the ceremony a different way because there may be too many cultural inconsistencies for you to participate.”*
- *“People who are coming to ceremony or coming to a smaller event at SNAHC, we shouldn't be as worried as who's who or who's what. It's just dividing us more.”*
- *“I'm not saying to have temazcals [Mesoamerican sweat lodge] and sweats open to the public, but certain aspects can be shared within the community.”*
- *“It would be the hope that other people who come, who aren't a part of that tribe, respect that and stay off to the side lines to watch.”*
- *“It's not really about excluding people. There are certain things that shouldn't be open, and everybody comes. How we decide what those are, I think that's some type of elder's council or elder's group that looks at the types of CIP classes—of the types of ceremony that are happening.”*
- *“Some of these things have rules. But the people you are going to get should be able to go over those rules and say if we're going to offer this to the community—these are why we have rules in order for us to continue down this path so that way our community can do well in our traditional way.”*

Theme 6: Autonomy. Through the discussion of autonomy emerged notions of cultural sustainability, vitality, and the transfer of traditional knowledge to ensure accessibility to future generations.

Participants held varying perspectives regarding the transmission of ancestral knowledge. Some underscored its significance in nurturing and rejuvenating AI/AN identities, while others prioritized the importance of forging new traditions, acknowledging the complexities of navigating contemporary Indian country. Additionally, one participant highlighted the need to address self-care within the community, aiming to foster self-sufficiency among the AI/AN population. Through a close examination of this dialogue, SNAHC will enhance its ability to address these concerns. Providing essential tools, resources, and space for the cultivation of autonomy. Engaging more healers, teachers, and guest speakers within our programming, SNAHC will uplift Sacramento AI/AN leaders and community members, as reflected by this quote: “I think there is a hunger, especially with our younger people, for that. Our elders are always in a situation, they may not always be available, but bringing elders in to share their story to share how they grew up in a community or reservation or rancheria. All those things really help our community and it's about healing.” Utilizing our teaching kitchen and community garden to offer nutrition and traditional

foods classes and food sovereignty education in addition to spirituality workshops will provide the opportunity to “replicate and carry on these traditions” and “create new traditions” to allow for AI/AN life-ways to thrive and be passed down. Improving program accessibility will not only encourage our California American Indian community to continue their traditional ways, but also create “inspiration” for AI/AN guests on California territory to research “what is traditional” to their lands. SNAHC is dedicated to strengthening and nurturing autonomy within the community, ensuring that the rich tapestry of traditions and cultures remain vibrant, thriving, and passed down to the next generation.

Quotes About *Autonomy*

- *“[In relation to traditional health, Native community members need the] Ability to replicate and carry on these traditions.”*
- *“[In relation to traditional health, Native community members need] Something you can take home to your family and spread.”*
- *“[Traditional health is] Creating that inspiration to learn about what is traditional to the lands we come from.”*
- *“Traditional health that is going to allow our ways of life and traditions and cultures to stay alive with them to the next generation.”*
- *“Traditional medicine includes all the teachings that have been passed down to us over generations.”*
- *“Learning is like, you know, we’re starting to come back to our traditional ways and relearning how to use our plant medicines and how to be able to incorporate these teachings into our everyday lives.”*
- *“We can learn for ourselves how to better care for our bodies.”*
- *“My thought process is that if we had a garden, we’d be able to garden and with the produce we’d be able to can our own food.”*

Summary of Findings

The sale of herbal remedies from SNAHC was an area of differing opinion among focus group members. For some, this seemed helpful, and for others, it was controversial and/or even offensive. A bulk of discussion in one of the focus groups centered around who would be welcome at SNAHC ceremonies if SNAHC were to provide them, and some were not interested in SNAHC providing any ceremony-type services. Results from both groups indicate SNAHC should provide cultural classes, food sovereignty education, and food/cooking demonstrations.

Recommendations

- SNAHC will determine which of the expanded traditional health services will be implemented first, and in what modality. SNAHC will also use findings to discuss topics like ceremony/sweat lodges or sale of specific herbal remedies where there were many

differing points of view. SNAHC will expand traditional health services in a way that best fits the opinions presented in this report.

- We will also explore the sale of herbal remedies.
- SNAHC will continue GONA programming to support community needs and focus new traditional health classes on the provision of culture-based classes, cooking demonstrations, and food sovereignty.
- In the future, SNAHC will reassess if the community has additional interest in ceremonial programming being offered by/at SNAHC.