Aboriginal Community Youth Resiliency Network

From small ACYRNS: working with aboriginal communities to reduce youth suicide risk

Suicide risk
First Nations carry a disproportionate burden of youth suicide risk in Canada. Among First Nations youth aged 15-17 years, 21% reported ever contemplating suicide compared with 7% of non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Prevention literature has focused on identifying underlying mental health conditions associated with suicide. ACYRN attempted to identify community and family characteristics and factors that protected against adolescent suicide risk; including community social capital, the influence of parents and peers and engagement in planning for the future.

Culturally relevant research
ACRYN represents a partnership between researchers and communities. Under a community research agreement, community members participated in the research design, including drafting of questionnaires.

Community based researchers (CBRs):
- received training to collect, enter and validate data
- participated in data analysis
- designed evidence based interventions and prepared proposals and budgets for these interventions.

The interventions
Researchers from the communities discussed survey findings with community members and planned and implemented interventions based on the local evidence. The interventions included:

- Youth teaching parents about texting
- Youth partnering with elders (providing meals and yard work)
- Sports challenges for family teams
- Youth set their goals and orchestrated their own fund raising events.

Further information available from:
http://www.pimatisiwinn.com/online/?page_id=238