

Spotlight on: Indigenous Communities



Office of
Mental Health

OMH's Spotlight series highlights the challenges faced by different New York populations. We recognize the unique issues surrounding Indigenous Communities and invite you to learn more.

Did you Know?



Data from: NAMI, US. Dept of Health and Human Services, Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties (NACS)

Indigenous people currently make up about **1.5%** of the U.S. population

Traditional Indigenous wisdom **teaches healthy living, cultural pride, and sustainable relationships, both with nature and each other.**

Native Nations, organizations, researchers, community members, and coalitions are **developing culturally based strategies and programs to restore the health and wellbeing of Indigenous communities across Turtle Island** (aka North America).

The Impact of Inter-Generational Trauma

Indigenous people have experienced mass violence, forced resettlement, and cultural destruction throughout much of history. These experiences cause multi-generational trauma for Indigenous people.

This unresolved historical trauma has dramatically impacted Indigenous health and caused inequities which include some of the highest rates of:



- diabetes
- cancer
- obesity
- homelessness
- addiction
- youth suicide
- shortened life expectancy
- child abuse
- incarceration
- domestic violence

Take Action

Educate yourself:

Learn about some of the historical traumas that impact the Indigenous communities, including residential boarding schools and forced resettlement.

Attend Native-led trainings on cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and historical traumas.

Develop Indigenous community advisory committees to ensure that their input shapes programs and services that are culturally appropriate and effective.

Recognize the value of comprehensive, holistic approaches to mental health that recognize physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and environmental health.

Share resources:

Consult with experienced organizations (local, statewide and national) that provide supports and services to Indigenous people. Here are a few to explore:

[NY DOH American Indian Health Program](#)
[NY OCFS Office of Native American Services](#)
[American Indian Community House](#)
[Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties \(NACS\)](#)

Develop a network of referral partners and organizations that have also adapted best practices and recommendations from Native people and trainings.

Support the development of innovative, culturally based programs that support the healing of historical traumas for Indigenous people.

Need Help?

Crisis Text Line: Text GOT5 to 741741

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org/chat

StrongHearts Native Helpline: 1-844-762-8483 (Domestic violence helpline for American Indians and Alaska Natives)

NY Domestic Violence Helpline: 800-942-6906 or Text 844-997-2121.