



**SOUTH DAKOTA  
STATE UNIVERSITY**

College of Nursing Native American  
Nursing Education Center

# Development of a strengths- focused family-based program to prevent adverse childhood experiences

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**RCFP**

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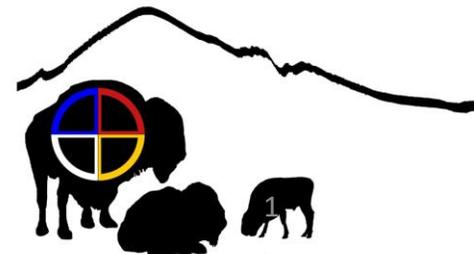
**CYFS**



*Youth & Family  
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# Context of ACEs in the Great Plains region

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# In South Dakota...

- ❖ American Indian individuals are nearly three times more likely than White individuals to report 5+ ACEs
- ❖ 17% of American Indian individuals report 5 or more ACEs
- ❖ Average ACE score for foster care 3-4
- ❖ Average ACE score for residential care 6-7
- ❖ ACE scores have increased during COVID

# In South Dakota...

- ❖ In our professional focus group, professionals said that they take ACE scores, but are not sure what to do with the score
- ❖ More work needed that centers Lakota tradition and practices
- ❖ Racism and discrimination compounds ACEs experiences

# What can we do to prevent ACEs?

# Reconnecting to Cultural Identity

- ❖ Historical and intergenerational trauma
- ❖ ACEs for Natives in South Dakota
- ❖ Reconnecting inherit potential
- ❖ Culture is healing, mending the Sacred Hoop
  - ❖ Spirituality and language, Native people are resilient
  - ❖ Significance of the Black Hills and sacred sites
  - ❖ Star knowledge
- ❖ Practice-based evidence rather than evidence-based practice

# Resilience as Prevention

- ❖ Culture is resilience
- ❖ Intergenerational resilience
- ❖ Strengthened cultural identity (Oré, 2016)

# CDC Toolkit

## **Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence**

- ❖ Social-emotional learning
- ❖ Safe dating and healthy relationships skills programs
- ❖ Parenting skills and family relationship approaches

# Strengthening Families Program

- ❖ 50% reduction in child maltreatment (Kumpfer & Magalhães, 2018)
- ❖ Increased likelihood of family reunification following child welfare intervention (Brook et al., 2011)
- ❖ Adapted and evaluated in dozens of countries
- ❖ Adapted for Indigenous communities
  - ❖ Bii-Zin-Da-De-Dah (Whitbeck et al.)
  - ❖ Thiwáhe Gluwáš'akapi (Whitesell et al., 2019)

# Rapid City Family Project

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# Project Purpose

- ❖ Develop and evaluate a strengths-based, culturally-grounded adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) prevention program
  - ❖ Multi-stakeholder collaboration
  - ❖ Three-year project funded by the CDC
- ❖ Community-led

# Research and Practice Advisory Board (RPAB)

# Tiwahe Wowasake: Features

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- Key outcomes: family cohesion and bonding; communication skills; expressing gratitude; problem-solving; caregiver monitoring skills and youth empowerment to prevent abuse; connection to external resources
- Format: family dinner followed by two-part sessions
- Tone: fun and engaging



# Tiwahe Wowasake: Program Outline

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- Session 1: Canteognake (Love)
- Session 2: Wopila (Gratitude)
- Session 3: Wolakota (Harmony)
- Session 4: Wa o'hola (Respect)
- Session 5: Cantewasake (Fortitude)
- Session 6: Woohitike (Bravery)
- Session 7: Wayunonihan (Honor)



# Recruitment and Retention Strategies

- ❖ Building relationships
- ❖ Door knocking
- ❖ Community events (e.g., pow-wows)
- ❖ Community feeds
- ❖ Community partners
- ❖ Incentives
- ❖ Branding

# Focus Group Data from Youth, Caregivers, and Professionals

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# Focus Groups: Themes

- ❖ Spending time together with one another/family bonding (e.g., outdoor activities, reading, arts and crafts)
- ❖ Showing love: telling them frequently, physical touch, celebrating accomplishments, showing children they are a priority, rules/expectations
- ❖ Importance of communication in managing family challenges
- ❖ Helping child manage emotions: music, social support, listened, think through it, professional support

# Focus Groups: Themes

- ❖ Keeping children safe (e.g., parental monitoring, red flags)
- ❖ Family/cultural values: honesty, trust, respect, communication, helping others
- ❖ Community positives [e.g., Ateyapi] and negatives [e.g., transportation, racism]; needing support from the community for drug/alcohol abuse
- ❖ Caregivers model resilience & providing children with things they did not have as a child

# Plans for Photovoice

Funded by the  
Vucurevich Foundation

The logo for the Research Center for Family, Population, and Health (RCFP) is a yellow circle containing the text "RCFP" in red, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

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# Intergenerational Photovoice

- ❖ Document family strengths through photography
- ❖ Youth and caregivers participate in talking circles
- ❖ Will also yield ideas for programming
- ❖ Photos will be displayed in community centers as well as during the programming sessions

# Photovoice Example



*“you can still flourish when  
...you're in really bad situations.”*

*“if you like keep trying or are  
persistent with the way you do  
things and if like, you don't give in  
to other people if you are  
persistent enough eventually you  
can still do...like it's your decision  
to do what you're going to do.”*

# Photovoice Example



*“Before you are born, your family prepares for you. They take a lot of time making your moccasins and getting everyone ready for your arrival. They do this because they love you and want to support you. As you grow, your initial pair of moccasins won’t fit. Your family keeps making you new ones that fit you. It’s the same thing with boundaries. Your family gives you boundaries like structure and rules of kinship so you can grow and be safe.”*

# Evaluation Plans

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# Evaluation Plan

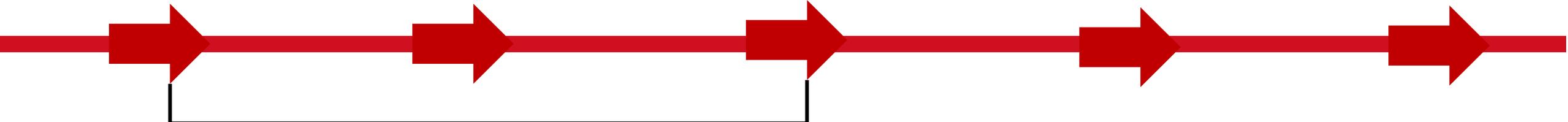
Open pilot trial (Summer 2021)

150 families enroll and pre-test survey (Fall 2021)

75 families complete intervention (Winter 2021/2022)

6-month post-test (Spring 2022)

Remaining families complete intervention (Spring 2022)



**Process evaluation:**  
Fidelity checks  
Photovoice  
Exit interviews



**TO FIND OUT MORE  
INFORMATION, PLEASE  
CONTACT US:**



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