



PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AMONG INDIGENOUS YOUTH:

Establishing and Evaluating an Indigenous-led Sexual Violence Prevention Center, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation

OVERVIEW

As part of its 2022 Grand Challenges Catalyst Competition, the University of Nebraska–Lincoln has committed \$3.2 million to establish an Indigenous-led sexual violence prevention center (SVPC) on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. The SVPC — to be named by the community — will create jobs, provide training and education opportunities, and bring sexual violence prevention to K-12 youth across the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

The center's approach will be adapted from IMpower United, an evidence-based, impactful and comprehensive sexual violence prevention program and support system for survivors. After initial implementation, the center's Indigenous staff will work with other Tribal/Indigenous communities across the U.S. to offer the culturally adapted IMpower sexual violence prevention programming. Sustainability of the SVPC as an Indigenous-led organization is a key focus of the work. This initiative also includes a youth-led documentary component.

Collaborators

The project includes the Interpersonal Violence Research Laboratory, IMpower United, and a number of Tribal nations, Native leaders and Native-led organizations.

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Support

The project is housed in the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools, and funded by the UNL Office of the Chancellor and the Office of Research and Economic Development.

research.unl.edu/grandchallenges

IMPACT

The expected impact of this collective work is to witness dramatic reductions in sexual violence among Indigenous persons across the U.S. with the hopes that all Indigenous youth will have the opportunity to receive a culturally adapted version of the IMpower initiative by 2050. The SVPC project is unprecedented in terms of scope and likely impact.

BACKGROUND

Indigenous peoples experience sexual violence at rates higher than any other racial/ethnic group in the U.S. Sexual violence among Indigenous peoples is rooted in colonization and multiple historical traumas, as well as ongoing systemic racism and oppression. Despite this, Indigenous peoples are highly resilient — and connection to one's Indigenous culture is an important part of this resilience. As such, there is increasing recognition that effective prevention efforts for Indigenous peoples need to be culturally grounded.



IMpower United

impowerunited.org

IMpower United is a K-12 sexual violence prevention program that originated in high-risk environments in East Africa. IMpower teaches youth evidence-based prevention strategies, while providing critical life skills and promoting self-worth. The IMpower program can be culturally adapted for diverse global contexts. **Results from a recent pilot evaluation of IMpower on an Indian reservation in South Dakota demonstrated that a culturally adapted curriculum reduced rates of sexual violence by 80%.**

VISION & APPROACH

The long-term goal of this work is to significantly reduce, if not eliminate, sexual violence among Indigenous peoples across the U.S. To achieve this goal, we will accomplish the following:

YEAR 1: Establish an Indigenous-led SVPC on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

- Focus will be on center start-up, feasibility and community needs assessments, community engagement and coordination activities, cultural adaptation of IMpower and intensive staff training.
- Staff will learn how to conduct cultural adaptations and process and outcome evaluations. All research will receive appropriate Tribal approval and that Tribes will own the data from their respective communities.
- Staff will also begin to learn about grant writing and other sustainability efforts.

YEAR 2: SVPC staff will lead a community-wide implementation and evaluation of the culturally adapted IMpower program on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

- Staff will receive intensive, hands-on training in program implementation and evaluation.

YEAR 3 & 4: SVPC staff will work with local Indigenous community members and other partners in South Dakota and Nebraska to adapt (as needed), implement and evaluate the IMpower system in their communities.

- SVPC staff will host trainings and share findings from their work to diverse audiences.
- Staff will continue to work towards sustainability of the SVPC.

DOCUMENTARY: A youth-led documentary will be produced to highlight via storytelling and other Indigenous methods the strengths and resilience of Indigenous communities and the impact of SVPC and IMpower in reducing sexual violence among Indigenous peoples.

- Indigenous youth will learn about the film-making processes.
- Indigenous youth and Elders will participate in the premiere of the film, locally and nationally.



CONTACT

More details on this work will be available soon, including opportunities to be involved.

Katie Edwards, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, CYFS and Educational Psychology
SVPC Co-Lead

katie.edwards@unl.edu | 603-422-3207