



November 2022 | Issue 16

# The BHWP Messenger

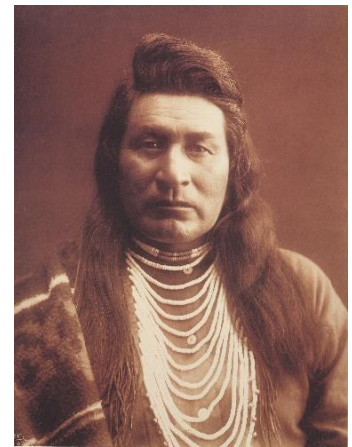
*Culturally relevant, evidence-based, and trauma-informed behavioral health and wellness resources for schools, staff, students, and families.*

*Welcome to The BHWP Messenger, a monthly newsletter focused on strengthening the resiliency of students, schools, colleges, universities, and staff. Each issue will share current information about webinars, trainings, resources, effective coping skills, and helpful videos to enhance your knowledge regarding behavioral health and wellness related topics.*

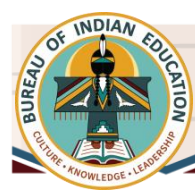
## Native American Heritage Month

November is Native American Heritage Month, also commonly known as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. During November, it is a time to honor the rich culture, history, traditions, and contributions of Native Americans.

Quoting President Biden from his [Proclamation on National Native American Heritage Month, 2022](#): “During National Native American Heritage Month, we celebrate Indigenous peoples past and present and rededicate ourselves to honoring Tribal sovereignty, promoting Tribal self-determination, and upholding the United States' solemn trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations.



America has not always delivered on its promise of equal dignity and respect for Native Americans. For centuries, broken treaties, dispossession of ancestral lands, and policies of assimilation and termination sought to decimate Native populations and their ways of life. But despite this painful history, Indigenous peoples, their governments, and their communities have persevered and flourished. As teachers and scholars, scientists and doctors, writers and artists, business leaders and elected officials, heroes in uniform, and so much more, they have made immeasurable contributions to our country's progress.”



November is a time to understand how historical traumas, such as colonization and genocide, have affected Native peoples throughout history and still do today. It is crucial to prioritize Tribal sovereignty, “the right of American Indians and Alaska Natives to govern themselves,” and empower Tribal nations through supportive action to create justice for historical injustices. Below are ways to observe and uplift Indigenous communities across the country:

- Learn about the Indigenous land you are on and the sacredness of the land. Visit the following site for an interactive, digital Indigenous land map: <https://native-land.ca/>
- View Indigenous art at museums, digital art exhibits, and other types of interactive art experiences
- Follow Native American influencers on social media
- Read books by Native American authors and poets.
- Listen to Indigenous podcasts, audiobooks, and music
- Watch a Native American documentary or series
- Support Native-owned businesses
- Donate to Native-led nonprofit organizations

Encourage students and youth to continue learning about Native American culture and heritage through lesson plans, activities, and projects. Several resources are included below to review and use in the classroom and at home. It is vital to take the time to discuss challenges within Native American communities, locally and nationally, as well as highlight the “wins” and successes throughout Native Lands. November provides an excellent opportunity to have these conversations and appreciate past and present Indigenous peoples.

For more information, please visit these websites:

<https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/for-teachers/>

<https://www.teachervision.com/holidays/native-american-heritage-month>

For lesson plans, printables, posters, books, and more resources, please visit:

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/native-american-and-alaska-native-heritage-month>

Tribal Nations Maps

<https://data.gov/climate/tribal-nations/tribal-nations-maps/index.html>

<https://biamaps.doi.gov/>



## Indigenous Recipe from Sean Sherman, The Sioux Chef

### Squash and Apple Soup with Fresh Cranberries



#### *Ingredients*

- 2 Tablespoons sunflower oil
- 1 Wild onion, chopped, or  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped shallot
- 2 Pounds winter squash, seeded, peeled, and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 Tart apple, cored and chopped
- 1 Cup cider
- 3 Cups vegetable stock
- 1 Tablespoon maple syrup or more to taste
- Salt to taste
- Sumac to taste
- Chopped fresh cranberries for garnish

#### *Directions*

Heat the oil in a deep, heavy saucepan over medium heat and sauté the onion, squash, and apple until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in the cider and stock, increase the heat, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the squash is very tender, about 20 minutes. With an immersion blender or working in batches with a blender, puree the soup and return to the pot to warm. Season to taste with maple syrup, salt, and sumac. Serve with fresh cranberries.





## Laughter as Medicine

Indigenous humor is so contagious that it can take over the energy in the room. Imagine a room full of family, relatives, and friends laughing, and there always seems to be those one or two individuals whose laughter makes you laugh even harder. What a powerful moment of joy and good feelings.

There is no doubt that laughter is an important part of our culture. In fact, it is at the heart of our resilience. No matter how difficult life can be, we always find something to laugh at in life. How many times have you attended a wake or funeral, and someone shared a funny memory of the loved one who passed on to the spirit world? Even during ceremonies, the spiritual elder or intercessor may share something funny. How often have you retold a story about something funny involving a family member or relative? Sometimes, those events were not funny at the time, but as time passed, even the person who is the focus of the memory can laugh at themselves too.



Our ancestors left us with many tools to ensure we remain resilient, and laughter is one of those tools. The gift of laughter is healing for the mind, body, and soul. Laughter can heal without the use of pharmaceuticals and is being included in cognitive-based therapies. The amount of dopamine and serotonin laughter produces has been shown to reduce stress, increase attention, and provide an overall sense of relaxation in the body. (Yim, 2016).

School and residential settings can use humor to provide an effective way of connecting with students and colleagues. Having a sense of belonging is crucial for creating and maintaining effective relationships. For humor to be effective, it needs to be healthy and inclusive of everyone. Negative humor is demeaning or embarrassing and should never be used. Using humor positively doesn't single people out or include "inside" jokes that only some people will understand. By using humor to make everyday life more enjoyable, people are more able to connect and feel supported when challenging times arise.

Looking for a healthy way to incorporate humor into the school or residential environment? Start by laughing at yourself when you do something silly or wrong! Students of all ages enjoy appropriate humor added to homework, tests, or class assignments. Another idea is to post cartoons that will be funny for everyone in a central place everyone can see.



Additional Resources for support can be found at:

[Children's Minnesota | Encouraging Your Child's Sense of Humor](#)

[American Psychological Association | Using humor in the college classroom: The pros and cons](#)

[Edutopia | Using Humor in the Classroom](#)

## References

Yim, J. E. (2016, July 16). *Therapeutic benefits of laughter in mental health: A theoretical review*. The Tohoku Journal of Experimental Medicine. Retrieved November 9, 2022, from

[https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/tjem/239/3/239\\_243/\\_article](https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/tjem/239/3/239_243/_article)

## Laughter as Medicine, Wellness Moment



A new Wellness Moment video, "Laughter as Medicine" has been posted to the [BHWP YouTube Channel](#) and the [BHWP website](#). This short video and resource card is available to help enhance wellness. They can be used to encourage students and colleagues to use appropriate humor and laughter as medicine.

## Laughter Activity: Imitate a Character or Tell a Joke

Busy schedules and back-to-back school classes can create stress and anxiety for some students. Adding humor and laughter into the day can help children and youth deal with stress and see things from many perspectives. Teachers and parents who illustrate how to face adverse situations with a sense of humor teach kids to develop a positive outlook toward life.

Humor and laughter play a crucial role in children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. Be a role model by teaching kids how to have a healthy, positive sense of humor and laugh to reduce tension. A healthy sense of humor doesn't single people out or attack others. By designating your classroom a "No Hurt Humor" area and sharing appropriate humor, kids can learn to see beyond the surface of things and enjoy and participate in the playful aspects of life. Remember to share jokes children and youth will understand, and that feel safe for everyone.



## Joke of the Day:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>What color do cats prefer?</p> <p><i>Purr-ple</i></p>	<p>Why couldn't the bicycle stand up?</p> <p><i>Because it was two tired.</i></p>	<p>What do you call a seagull that flies over the bay?</p> <p><i>A bagel.</i></p>	<p>What is a rabbit's favorite kind of music?</p> <p><i>Hip-hop.</i></p>	<p>What did the circle say to the triangle?</p> <p><i>I don't see your point.</i></p>

## Virtual Talking Circles: December 6 and December 15, 2022

BHWP continues to offer two virtual Talking Circles each month. Virtual Talking Circles will occur on Tuesday, December 6, and Thursday, December 15, 2022.

Both virtual Talking Circles will begin at 1:30 p.m. Pacific, 2:30 p.m. Mountain, 3:30 p.m. Central, and 4:30 p.m. Eastern.



Virtual Talking Circles are available to all staff or employees from Bureau-operated schools (BOS), Tribally-controlled schools (TCS), Navajo District schools, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), Haskell Indian Nations University, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and employees within any BIE department. To get started, we recommend you watch our Talking Circle PSA video, which is available on the [BHWP YouTube channel](#). This will introduce the basics of Talking Circles and encourage interested people to join us for future sessions! You can register by [visiting our events calendar](#) – make sure not to miss out because space is limited.

If your college, university, program, or department has experienced a recent crisis, you can reach out to BHWP for your own Talking Circle with staff/colleagues. Please email [biebhwp@tribaltechllc.com](mailto:biebhwp@tribaltechllc.com) to coordinate a private Talking Circle.





## Meet a Member of Our BHWP Team

### Care Coordinator Kelly Walker, LMSW

My name is Kelly Walker, and I am Arikara, Hidatsa, and Comanche. I have been part of the BHWP team as a Care Coordinator for 5 months. I enjoy our team meetings as they allow me to get to know the people I am working with better. I look forward to the jokes and my co-worker's funny responses. We are a great team!



I live in Lawrence, Kansas, the home of Haskell Indian Nations University and The University of Kansas, where I obtained my higher education. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Indian Studies and a Master of Science degree in Social Work. I always knew I wanted to work with our Indigenous population, but I needed to figure out how I could help and the capacity of help I could provide. Working at BHWP allows me to work on the macro level of social work to help our Indigenous people. I have social work experience working in a community mental health center, a high school, and an urban area Indian center. However, the work I will do with BHWP will allow me to reach more Indigenous people on an online platform.

My hobbies include dancing women's southern traditional at powwows and being outdoors riding my bike, paddleboarding, or taking photographs. I also enjoy reading, watching TikToks, spending time with my family and friends, and keeping up with the Kansas Jayhawks team during basketball season. I never thought I would be a dog person but my brother's Shiba-Inu changed my mind! This month I am planning a dog birthday party for my dog niece!

I stay healthy by giving thanks to our Creator and starting my day in prayer; this helps me to begin my day grounded. I also stay healthy by ensuring I have space to talk with someone I can trust to release and process anything that may be challenging. Lastly, I continue to work on being mindful in all aspects of my life. Being mindful can be challenging but staying present has helped me appreciate all the good life has to offer.