



Bureau of Indian Education  
**Behavioral Health  
& Wellness Program**

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# 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 wellness webinars, resources, effective skills, and helpful videos to enhance your knowledge.

## Suicide Prevention

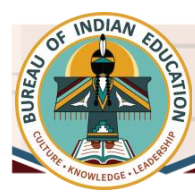


How can we respond when someone says or does things that are potential signs of suicide? The way we talk about suicide can encourage someone to speak and share, or it may push them away. By learning how to communicate effectively and share hope, we can take steps to prevent suicide. One crucial question to ask directly is, “Are you thinking about suicide?” Educators, caregivers, and relatives can help people experiencing intense emotional pain by understanding the warning signs of suicide, finding resources for someone feeling suicidal, and sharing hope.

Ways to share hope are advocating for and supporting trauma-informed suicide prevention efforts in our communities, learning effective communication, watching for warning signs, and sharing time or resources.

This summer, the new designated three-digit dialing code that will route callers to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (now known as the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)) went live across the United States. When people call, text, or chat 988 for themselves or someone they know, they will be connected to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing mental health-related distress. This includes thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.





As September was National Suicide Prevention Month, the Wellness Wednesday webinar covered Suicide Prevention. Information and resources were shared by BHWP Behavioral Health Specialist Autumn Drags Wolf, LCSW, and Behavioral Health Clinical Manager Carla Parnacher, LCSW. Did you know that suicide rates for Native Americans and Alaska Natives are three times higher than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States? As suicide has touched so many people, this webinar was well attended. The presentation is available on the [BHWP YouTube channel](#) or our [website](#). A copy of the [presentation is also available online](#). If you are interested in learning more about suicide prevention, please email the BHWP team at [biebhwp@tribaltechllc.com](mailto:biebhwp@tribaltechllc.com).

BHWP offers Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training monthly. YMHFA is an evidence-based, trauma-informed training designed to teach participants how to assist a youth experiencing a mental health or substance misuse crisis. Participants learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies on how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to find resources. This curriculum from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing certifies participants for 3-years in Adult or Youth Mental Health First Aid. [Upcoming YMHFA trainings can be viewed on the BHWP website](#).

YMHFA teaches that there are five key actions in the Mental Health First Aid Action Plan, commonly referred to as ALGEE:

1. **ASSESS** for risk of suicide or harm and assist with any crisis
2. **LISTEN** and communicate non-judgmentally
3. **GIVE** support and information
4. **ENCOURAGE** the person to get appropriate professional help
5. **ENCOURAGE** self-help and other supports

## Why Youth Mental Health Matters

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>

**One in five** youth will experience a mental health challenge at some point during their life.

**17.1 million** youth under the age of 18 have or have had a psychiatric disorder – more than the number of children with cancer, diabetes, and AIDS combined.

**7.4%** of children in the United States have a mental health visit in a given year.



Additional Resources for support can be found at:

[The Trevor Project | For Young LGBTQ Lives](#)

[Toolkit | Zero Suicide \(edc.org\)](#)

[Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools | SAMHSA Publications and Digital Products](#)

## Wellness Wednesday

The next Wellness Wednesday webinar will be held on November 9, 2022. The topic is “Emotional Intelligence and Effective Communication.” BHWP Behavioral Health Clinical Manager Carla Parnacher and Behavioral Health Specialist Nikki Factor will lead this webinar.

Please [click here](#) for the event page to register. After registering for this event, an email confirmation will be sent with a meeting link to join via Zoom and a link to add the webinar to your calendar. *Note: If you did not receive a confirmation email, check your Spam or Junk email folders.* Webinar start times are 1:30 p.m. Pacific, 2:30 p.m. Mountain, 3:30 p.m. Central, and 4:30 p.m. Eastern.

We look forward to seeing you there!

## Virtual Talking Circles: November 8 and 17, 2022

BHWP continues to offer two virtual Talking Circles each month. Virtual Talking Circles will occur on Tuesday, November 8, 2022 and Thursday, November 17.

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 public service announcement (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

### Communication Specialist Sara Brave Heart, BA

My name is **Sara Brave Heart**. I am the Communication Team Lead with the Behavioral Health and Wellness Program, providing support to our Behavioral Specialists, Education Specialists, and program leadership. I help write articles and create webinars and videos.

I live in Mankato, Minnesota, with my husband. We have four kids and five grandchildren. Raising a family has been an adventure and has seen our family live in several states and different areas of the country. In 2011, our family moved to Mankato, Minnesota, to be part of the reconciliation work happening in Mankato since the late 1960s. This reconciliation effort is to heal from the largest mass hanging in the history of the United States here in Mankato in 1862 after the U.S. Dakota Conflict.



Since moving to Mankato, I have been part of the annual Reconciliation Pow Wow; and worked with the city, colleges, and churches to continue the conversation, education, and activities around reconciliation. I also have seen three of my four kids graduate high school and had the opportunity to watch them see the value of being involved in the community as they grow into adults.

My education background is a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. I have done many things over the years, but the work I have always enjoyed the most is helping others tell their stories, share information, and shine. I am very glad to be part of the BHWP team and help share wellness information. My wellness practices include an active prayer life, working in my garden, baking, and connecting with my family.







## Fun Fall Family Activity: Nature Scavenger Hunt

Fall is the perfect time for a nature scavenger hunt: the leaves change colors and fall, the air is crisp, and children are eager for outdoor fun! Parents and relatives can engage kids by creating a scavenger hunt for outdoor walks and hikes. Plan to design the list of items to find based on the hiking location. Several websites also have printable nature scavenger hunt lists that instruct kids to find fall objects such as acorns, animal prints, crooked sticks, water, a rock, leaves of different colors, and other fun fall things. Encourage kids to keep an eye out for their scavenger hunt items along the walk and celebrate with them when they can check one off their list! Here is a sample nature scavenger hunt you can try, or add or own items to. Place a checkmark next to each item you find. Add your own items in the blank boxes. Have fun and remember – the experience means as much as how many items you find!

A checklist for a nature scavenger hunt on a teal background decorated with autumn leaves. The items are arranged in three columns, each preceded by an empty square checkbox. The items are: Acorn, Pinecone, Cloud, Orange Leaf, Sticks, Bug, Squirrel, Brown Leaf, Bird, Mushroom, Mud, Rocks, Ant Hill, Spider Web, and a blank line for a custom item.

<input type="checkbox"/> Acorn	<input type="checkbox"/> Pinecone	<input type="checkbox"/> Cloud
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange Leaf	<input type="checkbox"/> Sticks	<input type="checkbox"/> Bug
<input type="checkbox"/> Squirrel	<input type="checkbox"/> Brown Leaf	<input type="checkbox"/> Bird
<input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Mud	<input type="checkbox"/> Rocks
<input type="checkbox"/> Ant Hill	<input type="checkbox"/> Spider Web	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

We welcome any comments or suggestions for The BHWP Messenger.  
Contact us at [biebhw@tribaltechllc.com](mailto:biebhw@tribaltechllc.com) or visit [www.biebhw.com](http://www.biebhw.com)